

THE

BAPTISM OF INFANTS

AUTHORIZED BY SCRIPTURE





T H E  
BAPTISM OF INFANTS,  
AUTHORIZED BY SCRIPTURE,  
A N D

The Practice of the Church of CHRIST  
I N E V E R Y A G E.

I N R E P L Y  
To Mr. BIRT's PAMPHLET,  
E N T I T L E D,  
A Defence of Scripture Baptism.

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By HERBERT MENDS.

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GO TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM.  
MATTHEW.

—•••••—  
Qui præcipit *omnes gentes* Baptizari, is etiam præcipit  
Baptizari INFANTES, preceptum enim de *genere*  
includit *omnes species*.

TURRETINE.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE long period which has intervened between the publication of the Rev. Mr. BIRT's Pamphlet, and of this Reply, seems, in some degree, to render an apology requisite. This opportunity, therefore, is embraced, to say, that this Treatise would have made a much earlier appearance, had not a long and painful indisposition rendered me incapable of finishing the work. And after it had been sent to the press, many delays occurred, which could not be avoided. It is, however, at length, with great diffidence, presented to the impartial public.

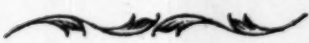
H. M.

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10 JA 66



To the Church of Christ, assembling in  
Batter-Street, Plymouth.



*To defend the cause of, what I deem truth—to confirm the religious opinions of those, whose spiritual prosperity lies near my heart—and to guard the minds of the Disciples of Jesus, against those principles which bear so unfavourable an aspect on their privileges, this attempt, to plead the cause of our Infant Offspring, is humbly submitted to your serious and candid attention.*

*It is designed, more especially, for the benefit of the younger branches of this Church and Congregation: and to whom this Treatise, as a small token of affection and esteem, is most respectfully dedicated,*

*By your Friend,*

*And Servant,*

*In the Gospel of Christ,*

**HERBERT MENDS.**

*Plymouth, February 11th, 1797.*

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## ERRATA.

Page 2. Query V. for *circumfion*, read *circumcision*.

Page 4. 23d line from the top, insert *the*.

Page 10. note, read page 22.

Page 13. 26th line, for *μαθησται* read *μαθησασθε*.

Page 22. 10th line, for *Jesus*, read *Jews*.

Page 26. 20th line, for *beiiivers*, read *believers*.

Page 28. 28th line, dele *of*.

10 JA 66

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T H E

BAPTISM of INFANTS, &c.

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WITH reluctance I enter the field of controversy. It has been trodden by illustrious characters, who have wielded the weapons with a masterly hand. My reluctance is proportionably increased, as I appear an opponent to one, of whom I have long entertained an high opinion, and in whose friendship I have experienced real satisfaction. But circumstanced as I am, a necessity is laid upon me, to vindicate principles, which I hold sacred; and plead the cause of those who cannot speak for themselves, and who are, by many, in the present day, deprived of the privileges of church membership.

With that diffidence, which a consciousness of inability imposes upon me, but, with that boldness, which a persuasion of being on the side of scripture and of truth, necessarily inspires, I enter on the discussion of this subject.

As I have said, that I am *constrained* to engage in this controversy; it will be proper to state the attending circumstances; I shall then cheerfully leave the decision to the candid and impartial public.

Sometime in August last, the following hand bill was given me, by one of the Members of my Church.

“TO ALL THAT LOVE TRUTH AND PEACE.

As union among professed christians is very desirable, and as a difference of sentiment, respecting baptism, is

one cause of division among them; a just Solution of the following Queries is earnestly requested, as it would have a happy tendency to promote christian concord.

Query I. What *precept* or *precedent* is there in scripture for Infant baptism?

Query II. What *spiritual promise* is made to the children of believers, more than to the offspring of others? Or, if there be any such promise, what proof does it afford of Infant baptism?

Query III. To what *peculiar privilege* are children admitted by baptism?

Query IV. Why are not infants admitted to the *Lord's supper*, as well as to baptism?

Query V. Why, if circumcision was a *seal of the covenant of grace*, did not Abraham circumcise his near kinsman, the righteous Lot? And why was baptism administered *before* circumcision was abolished, and *enjoined* on those who were circumcised?

Query VI. Does not the doctrine of Infant baptism *consign over to everlasting misery* all children that die in their infancy, (except those of believers) while it proceeds on a supposition, that the covenant of *circumcision* was the covenant of *grace*; and every infant, dying *unbaptized*, on the principle of *baptismal regeneration*?

Query VII. Can it be supposed, without absurdity, that two such different modes of administering the same institution, as dipping and sprinkling manifestly are, should be *both* agreeable to the law of Christ, in that case made and provided?

Query VIII. Is baptism a *prerequisite* to the Lord's table? If not, why do not the Pædobaptists admit persons



sions to communion, that are, in their judgment, *unbaptized*? If it be, why are the Baptists blamed for not admitting those, who, in their judgment, are unbaptized?

A calm discussion, and a scriptural solution of these Queries, are of great importance to the purity of a positive ordinance, and a branch of solemn worship.\*

The Person who put this into my hand, informed me, that the Reverend Mr. Birt had circulated it.

Acknowledging the truth of this information, Mr. B. says,† “Of their Author, I know nothing. At the close of one of our weekly meetings, I gave a few of them to the friends who were present; the rest I gave to three persons who called on me, and asked for them; I do not remember that I gave one to a *Pædobaptist*. This is the whole I know of, or have done with the questions.”

All this is to little purpose, for whether Mr. B. was the author, or not, he became responsible by circulating them. It is little better than trifling, to say, that he does not remember that he gave one to a *Pædobaptist*; for unquestionably, it was Mr. B's intention, that they should find their way into the hands of such, as believed and practised *Infant Baptism*: if not, to what purpose would it be, “earnestly to request a solution;” and what tendency could it have to “promote Christian concord, and an union among professed Christians,” if confined wholly,

† Page 1.

\* See an Answer to these Queries, addressed “To those who esteem the Essence of Religion of more Importance than the Forms and Ceremonies.” Printed by P. Nettleton, Plymouth, and sold by him and J. Heydon, Dock. Price one penny.

to that society of persons, who were already of one mind on that subject?

This hand-bill, therefore, has been justly considered, as AN OPEN CHALLENGE TO ALL PÆDOBAPTISTS, which, it would have been esteemed cowardly, not to have accepted, and which, silently to have consigned to oblivion, might have been considered as a breach of politeness towards our Anabaptist brethren. Thus the advocates for Infant Baptism, were constrained to defend themselves against an attack, thus illiberally, (and may I not say insidiously?) made, by the circulation of the hand-bill. When, therefore, (agreeably to "earnest request") a reply was made, it was little apprehended, that it would have been construed into an *insult*—especially an insult offered to the Rev. Mr. B. Little was it expected that Mr. B. would so far have resented it, as to have been influenced, formally to announce (as he did in a letter of the fifth of September last) his determination to break the bonds of friendship with me. In this letter, he says, "Last week I should have had the pleasure of visiting you, but was prevented by the appearance of a printed address, "To those who esteem the Essence of Religion, &c." And all this, only because he considered me as Author of that address!

If it would have been esteemed an unpardonable offence, to have replied to the above questions, it would have been kind and fair, in Mr. B. to have signified it, at the time of circulation; by which, the line of conduct of every Pædobaptist, would have been marked out.

However I may regret the loss of Mr. B's friendship, it is some consolation, that a friendship so easily broken, could

could not have been very strongly cemented; and is therefore, the less valuable in proportion to its versatility. Yet I am free to declare, that my esteem for him shall not be shaken; and however severely he may judge of the Author, as willing "if he had it in his power sadly to circumscribe the rights of the Baptists, and act as a rigid dictator"—still, on every occasion, I am free to declare for myself, that *my* hand and *my* heart shall be open to *him*, and to every Minister of Jesus Christ, let his sentiments be what they may, concerning the circumstances of religion, and modes of worship; for, I never thought, the water controversy of such consequence, as to interrupt, for a moment, the noble feelings of brotherly love.

I appeal to Mr. B. and to every Anti-pædobaptist in the vicinity, that since my residence in this town, my endeavours have been unremitting, to throw down every party-wall of distinction, and to unite all those, who believe the essential truths of Christianity, in the endearing bonds of Christian fellowship. And in the present instance, I am persuaded, that Mr. B. himself must acquit the Author of that Pamphlet of the charge of being the *aggressor*.

Mr. B.\* says, "that he has descended to *personal accusations*. This cannot be proved. The reply was evidently made without a knowledge of the Author, and it was addressed to every individual, who might deign to cast an eye on its pages. Highly as I respect Mr. B. I confess that I did not ('till now) consider him as the *representative* of the Anabaptists in this part of the king-

dom, so that no controversy could be maintained, on the subject of Baptism, without the Author's being chargeable with *personally* insulting him, and incurring the loss of his friendship. In some, this would be thought an assumption of no small consequence. But a consciousness, will always impart extreme sensibility. To this cause, in part, may be attributed that great irritability discovered through every part of Mr. B's Pamphlet, and the Reader will see, with how much truth he can say, "that he cannot dare to return" those severe expressions, which he supposes are used towards him. But this irritability, may be also easily accounted for, as nothing can more effectually rouse the Baptists than to detect them, in attempting to unsettle the minds of the young, and serious members of other churches.

That this charge is not groundless, I appeal to the state of the Anti-pædobaptist churches in general. Are they not chiefly composed of persons who received their first serious impressions under the ministry of Pædobaptists? and who once were in communion with our churches?

Mr. B.† kindles into a flame at the bare mention of this, and says, "If what is suggested at the close of the Pamphlet be designed for me, I declare it to be a groundless calumny, and call upon him to cast off his veil, and exhibit proof of his unworthy insinuations." I see no just cause for all this warmth. I will give it as *my* opinion, that the Author of that Address, did not design, what he said on that subject, for Mr. B. in particular; and that there was no more occasion, for Mr. B's application of it to himself, than to any other Anabaptist in



the County. This extreme sensibility however may lead some to suspect, that all was not right.

However angry Mr. B. may be, and however unworthy and groundless, he may deem the insinuations, I am convinced, from many years experience and observation, that the generality of the Ministers and People of that denomination, in this instance, act ungenerously. They insinuate themselves into the affections of Pædobaptist congregations, and embrace every opportunity of unsettling the minds of the young and unguarded, on the subject of Baptism, by lending them books, and puzzling them with certain questions. To such a length is this conduct carried by some, that an Author lately asserted, that *three-fourths* of the members in some Baptist churches, have been thus drawn from other societies. If they see a person under serious impressions, or struggling with doubts of his interest in the love of Christ, they say, "Friend, your darkness and distress may easily be accounted for—you live in the neglect of one of the positive commands of God; and how can you reasonably expect that the Lord will shine on your soul, and give you peace and joy in the Holy Ghost?" The distressed person (his mind awake to every thing that may encourage his hopes, or his fears) is alarmed, and eagerly asks, "Pray, Sir, tell me what command is this to which you allude? as far as I know myself, I would do any thing; I would comply with every injunction of my Lord." They readily reply, "You have never been buried with Christ in Baptism: You have not complied with the COMMAND, and the EXAMPLE, of Christ and his Apostles. As for your *Infant* Baptism, it was not  
your

your act, neither may children claim, nor are they fit subjects for that solemn institution." This staggers his belief—and as every one, under his first impressions, is strongly influenced by legal principles, he immediately submits to be *dipped*, in expectation of rising out of the water, fully assured of his interest in Christ.

This is not a case which exists in imagination only—it has *more than once* come within my own knowledge; and, I believe, a multitude of Pædobaptist Ministers in this kingdom, can confirm the truth of this representation. It is ungenerous. Were Baptism in adult age, and Baptism by immersion, necessary to the salvation of the soul, they would be justified in laying aside all ceremony, and adopting every method to awaken and undeceive. But as the Baptists themselves pretend not to assert this absurdity, (as on all hands it is allowed to be a mere circumstantial) I say again, it is ungenerous.—Therefore I adopt the sentiment and language of that Author, against whom Mr. B. is so exceedingly incensed. "It is far more becoming every disciple of the amiable Jesus, to behold with heart-felt pleasure (instead of attempting to break) the peace of a Christian society, for no other reason, than because that society has not seen it necessary to be plunged. That time which is spent in useless, injurious controversies, in compassing sea and land to make proselytes, and enticing the sheep of one fold to forsake their companions, and enter another, would be better employed in serious endeavours to rescue sinners from the power of Satan.—Such conduct would be more honourable to themselves, and more beneficial to their fellow-mortals."

Before

Before I enter on the discussion of the Subject in debate, I shall beg leave to lay before the Reader, a few preliminary remarks on Mr. B's pamphlet.

1st. Misrepresentation is no proof of the strength of an argument.—And I appeal to the judgment of every impartial Reader, whether Mr. B. has not misrepresented, the plain and obvious meaning of the Author of that pamphlet, whose words are these.† “Is the mere *rite*—the *mode* of Baptism—the *quantity* of water of such consequence? Does it enter so essentially into the nature of a Christian ordinance? The everlasting salvation of the soul, and the cultivation of the graces of the Spirit, are of greater consequence than the mere *MODE* of Baptism.” Now, with what appearance of justice can he ask, as he does in a note,§ “Is it consistent to represent *Baptism*, in one place, as a *mere form*,” and in another to say, “God has made it a prerequisite for admission into the Kingdom of Grace.” Or is it candid, to endeavour to persuade the Reader, that the Author considered Baptism, as a mere rite, a mere form and ceremony, as he does?‡ All his pathetic exclamations, and warm eulogia, on the divine authority, and vast importance of Baptism, vanish into air, as they apply not, in the smallest degree, to what the Author meant, and what *every* man of common sense, must *know* that he meant, when he used the terms, a *mere form*, *rite*, &c.—He must know, that they applied wholly, and exclusively, to the *MODE* of administration, and to the *quantity* of water used, and not to the *essence* of Baptism.

I most cheerfully subscribe to the following sentiments:

† Page 1 and 8.

§ Page 22.

‡ Pages 22 and 23.

"That Baptism is a part of gospel worship, and therefore comes to us, not only with divine authority, but also fraught with all-important, and most instructive truth."\* But will any Anti-pædobaptist assert all this, of the *mode of administration*, or the *quantity* of the water used in that ordinance? Are not these circumstantial, entirely *ab extra*, which may be used, or not used, according to the opinion of the persons engaged? Is the posture of the body in the act of prayer, or receiving the Lord's supper, an essential part of those important duties?

Let the matter be thus rightly stated, and the Author permitted to speak for himself, and he will not be afraid, again to assert, (however irreverent it may be deemed) that the *MODE* of administering the ordinance of Baptism, whether by *dipping*, or *sprinkling*, or *pouring* water, is a mere *rite*, *form*, and *ceremony*, and does not enter into the essence of that ordinance.

2ndly, Mr. B. finds fault with the expression, that "God has made Baptism, a prerequisite for admission into the Kingdom of Grace.† And I ask, is it not? Did not John and Philip, enforce Baptism, as necessary to admission into the gospel dispensation, frequently called the Kingdom of God? If Mr. B. does *not* consider it, in this light, why does he refuse admission to the Lord's table, to those, who, (*in his judgment*) have not been baptized? But, I confess, herein we look for *consistency* of conduct in vain, among the Anabaptists; for while *one* Church refuses such as have been baptized in their infancy, but not in adult age, *another* will readily receive them; herein most assuredly bearing testimony, to the

\* Mr. B. page

† Note, page 6.



validity of Infant Baptism. But these more liberal Baptists, seem to be conscious of the apparent impropriety of this conduct, and labour, as soon as possible, to persuade these Pædobaptists to go under water. Thus they openly become ANABAPTISTS, (that is to say) advocates for RE-baptism, or lie open to the charge, of admitting UN-baptized persons into church fellowship. We cheerfully leave them to chuse which alternative they please.

grdly. The sentiment of Tertullian, adopted by Mr. B. as his motto, and made his own,\* is highly objectionable. "THE SCRIPTURE FORBIDS, WHAT IT DOES NOT MENTION." It is a sentiment, which ought to be the *last* adopted by an Anti-pædobaptist, whose whole system depends on analogical reasoning, and inferences drawn from scripture premises, and scripture silence.—No sentiment can be more unfortunate than this, when applied to the subject in debate. It proves too much—much more, than the advocates for dipping would wish; as for instance; the scripture does not *mention*, that the subject should go UNDER water, therefore it *forbids* it: The scripture does not *mention*, that the *cloaths* should be baptized, therefore it *forbids* it; The scripture does not *mention*, that *women* should receive the Lord's supper, therefore it *forbids* it: The scripture does not *mention*, that the ordinance of the Lord's supper should be administered once a month *only*, therefore it *forbids* it: The scripture does not *mention*, that the Christian Sabbath, should be observed on the *first* day of the week, therefore it *forbids* it. I might go on to multiply cases without number, in which, were we to consider the *silence* of

\* Page 12.

scripture as a positive prohibition, we should be in danger of Will-worship. More than one-half of our acts of religious worship, and of social, and relative duties, would be absolutely forbidden: Yea, some most flagrant violations of moral virtue, might be perpetrated, not only with impunity, but with the sanction of the sacred scriptures!!—Credat Judæus!

It has ever been considered, by every rational mind, that inferences, and consequences, resulting from scripture premises, by just and logical deduction, are equally binding, with a positive, and literal command. Thus our Lord proved the crimes of heart-murder, and heart-adultery;† and thus he proved the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.\* Such a sentiment as this, must be pronounced an insult on common sense, whether expressed by a TERTULLIAN or a BIRT.

The long quotation from Dr. Owen, in Mr. B's pamphlet, will very feebly support adult Baptism, for the Doctor, is evidently reasoning on a subject of a very different nature. His design is to shew, that the Jews pleaded their *natural* descent from Abraham, as a just ground for their participation of *saving and spiritual* privileges; and that in this respect, they were awfully mistaken. This is evident from the last paragraph of the quotation. "*The Church unto whom all the promises belong, are only those, who are heirs of Abraham's faith, believing as he did, and thereby interested in his covenant.*" The Doctor could not mean, that the descendants of Abraham, were not entitled, by virtue of their relation to that Patriarch, to any *external* privilege, or to that of

† Matthew 5th.

\* Chap. 22d and 32d.

a *visible covenant relation* to God; for he was aware, that the Jews, as a nation, were a peculiar people, and more favoured, with external advantages, than any other.— Thus says Paul,\* “What advantage then hath the Jew? (i. e.) the seed of Abraham according to the *flesh*? or what profit is there in circumcision? (which seal was imparted to the seed according to the *flesh*, as well as to the seed according to the *promise*.) Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

The whole force, therefore, of this long quotation is lost, inasmuch, as it is directed to a point, which every evangelical Pædobaptist, will as cordially acknowledge, as the most rigid Anabaptist, that the children of parents, professing their belief in the doctrines of the gospel, who are baptized, are not on account of the faith and piety of parents, entitled to *spiritual privileges*, and *saving grace*. But we assert, (and we conceive, that we are supported by scripture) that the children of such parents, thus early devoted to God, in the ordinance of Baptism, ARE BY IT ADMITTED INTO AN EXTERNAL, AND VISIBLE COVENANT WITH GOD, they are introduced into the school of Christ, to be taught *the first principles of the oracles of God*, agreeably to the express words, and obvious meaning of the commission given to the Apostles, by our Lord after his resurrection. “Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them,† *μαθητεύσατε* (i. e.) GO MAKE THEM DISCIPLES.‡ Thus the venerable TUR-

\* Rom. 3d. and 12th.

† Matt. xxviii. 19.

§ Leigh's Crit: Sac: Thus the word is rendered by Bullinger, Turretine, Stockius, Beza, Gataker, Lightfoot, Witsius, Pool, Dodderidge, and almost every Interpreter.

RETINE explains the text, in the remarkable words, which I have chosen for my motto. “*Qui præcipit omnes gentes baptizari, is etiam præcipit baptizari infantes, præceptum enim, de genere includit omnes species.*”<sup>\*</sup> A command, which requires the Baptism of ALL NATIONS, necessarily requires the Baptism of INFANTS, who constitute a part of them; for the command, that refers to the GENUS must include the SPECIES.

Having made these remarks, I shall proceed, to offer some reflections on the SUBJECT OF BAPTISM; and the MODE in which Baptism may be administered, agreeably to the word of God, and the PRACTICE of the Church, since the days of CHRIST and his APOSTLES.

First—The SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

Here I beg leave to express my sentiments, in the full, and strong language of the Assembly of Divines. “Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience unto him; BUT INFANTS OF SUCH AS ARE MEMBERS OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH ARE TO BE BAPTIZED. We readily acknowledge, that persons who have never been educated in the principles of the Christian religion, have no right to the ordinance of Baptism, until they profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him. But, when they are brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, they (together with their children) ought to be baptized, although they are arrived at years of maturity. This was, precisely the case with all, in the time of Christ, who embraced him as the Messiah; and we find no instance, in the New Testament, in which

<sup>\*</sup> Instit: Theol: tom. IV. Loc: 19. Qu: 20.



the children of those who thus believed, were baptized in *adult* age. The reason is obvious. They were admitted into the visible Church *with their parents*, and by virtue of *their* faith; in the same manner, as the children of *Profelytes* were admitted, with *their* parents, into the Jewish Church by the ordinance of circumcision.

And that the Infants of *all*, professing their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, ought to be admitted into the visible Church by Baptism, we shall endeavour to prove by the following propositions.

First.—Infants of believers in every age, and under every dispensation, prior to that of the gospel, were considered as in covenant with God, and members of the visible Church.

On this ground, the whole controversy stands. It becomes us then, accurately to trace the sacred history, for instances in which, the LORD GOD has entered into covenant with man.

I think it will appear from the following, that in *all* ages of the Church, and in *every* covenant, God included, not only the parents, but their INFANT OFFSPRING.

The *covenant of works* made with Adam, in Paradise, included children. “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that (or as the Greek  $\epsilon\phi\omega$ , might be rendered, *in whom* i. e. *Adam*) all have sinned; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”†

† Rom. v. 12, 14.



*The covenant with Noah*, included his seed. § “And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, and I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and your seed after you.”

*The covenant with Abraham*, included his seed after him. ‡ “And I will establish my covenant between me, and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations.”

*The covenant with the tribe of Levi*. Deut. xviii. 1, 2. compared with Mal. ii. 4.

*The covenant with Phinehas*, included his seed after him. † “Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.”

*The covenant with David*. \* “Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.

When God entered into covenant with the *whole nation of Israel*, their children were included. This is clear, from the whole of the solemn transactions on Mount Sinai. || And when the Lord condescended to *renew* his covenant with Abraham to the whole Church, just before they entered Canaan, He addressed them in these remarkable words. \*\* “Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God—your LITTLE ONES, your wives, &c. that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.”

Hence it plainly appears, that in *every* covenant, which

§ Gen. ix. 8, 9.

‡ Gen. xvii. 7.

† Numbers xxv. 10, 11, 12.

\* 2 Sam. vii. 12, 16. and chap. xxiii. 5.

|| Vide Exod. xix. 34.

\*\* Deut. xxix. 10.

God has been pleased to make with men, their *children*—  
their LITTLE ONES were included!

And in that glorious day, (which we hope is now opening to the world) when “the ROD which is come forth out of the stem of Jesse, shall grow,” and shelter all the nations of the earth, beneath its grateful shade; when “He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth; when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;” in this illustrious period, who are the persons that shall partake of this glory and joy?—the GENTILES AND THEIR OFFSPRING! so testifies the prophet Isaiah.\* “Thus saith the Lord God, behold I will lift up mine hands to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders, “for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, AND THEIR OFFSPRING WITH THEM.”† Again, God says, by the mouth of the same Prophet,‡ “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and their SEED shall be known among the Gentiles, and their OFFSPRING among the people—THEY ARE THE SEED WHICH THE LORD HATH BLESSED!” The prophet Jeremiah, when speaking of the restoration of the Jews in the latter day, when there shall be but *one fold*, and *one Shepherd*, uses these striking words||—“They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King: (i. e. Jesus Christ, of whom David

\* Chap. xlix. v. 22.

† Chap. lxxv. v. 23.

‡ Chap. lxi. v. 8.

|| Chap. xxx. v. 9 and 20.

was a type, see Ezek. xxxiv. 23.) THEIR CHILDREN ALSO SHALL BE AS AFORETIME."

Thus we affirm, (in the strong language of Doctor Owen,\*) that "no instance can be given, from the Old, or New Testament, since the days of Abraham; none from the approved practice of the primitive Church, of any person, or persons, born of professing, believing parents, who were themselves made partakers of the initial seal of the covenant, being then in infancy, and designed to be brought up in the knowledge of God, who were not made partakers with them of the same sign and seal of the covenant."

But, as that memorable covenant of God, with Abraham, is that transaction, which, in a peculiar and highly emphatical manner, graciously includes the *infant offspring* of pious parents. And as this transaction is particularly combated by our Baptist brethren, it demands our more minute attention. The terms of the covenant are these.†—"AND I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND THEE, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE, IN THEIR GENERATIONS, FOR AN EVERLASTING COVENANT, TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE."

This evidently includes children. I know not a Baptist that denies it. But to avoid the force of the argument arising from these words, in favour of the covenant relation, and church-membership of the children of believing parents, under the *gospel*, our opponents say, that this covenant was nothing more than *national*, the covenant of *circumcision*, and included nothing but a grant of

\* Dr. Owen's Tracts, p. 576.

† Gen. xvii. 7.

*temporal* privileges; and that, therefore, as the Mosaic economy is abolished by Jesus Christ, that neither we, nor our children, can lay any claim to an interest in the blessings of this transaction.

But we shall endeavour to prove that this Abrahamic covenant, *was the* CHRISTIAN, or GOSPEL COVENANT—that COVENANT OF GRACE UNDER WHICH WE NOW ARE, and that Abraham, in this act was considered as the COVENANT-HEAD, the father of believing GENTILES, as well as JEWS. Consequently, the privileges granted to him, and TO HIS SEED, belong to us and TO OUR CHILDREN, agreeably to the declaration of Peter.\* “The promise is unto you and TO YOUR CHILDREN.”

Now, this could not be the *covenant of works*, for no such, was ever made with man after his apostacy. It could not be the *covenant of Horeb*, because that was made four hundred and thirty years, after the Lord spake these words to Abraham. The abolition of the Mosaic ritual, therefore could not destroy the covenant interest, and church-membership of children, whose right was established for ages *before* the Levitical law, or the birth of Moses: but it was the COVENANT OF GRACE; unchangeable in its nature and privileges!

And this position is supported by the following reasons:

First. It is stiled an everlasting covenant.

Second. It is founded on free grace. § “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God:” “therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all

\* Acts. ii. 39.

§ Rom. iv. 2, 16.



the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all."

Third. It was confirmed by the oath of God.\* "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH. This expression incontrovertibly proves, that the covenant made with Abraham, was not *national*, of the same nature with that made at Horeb, and confined to the *natural* descendants of the Patriarch. But the blessings of this covenant, were to be as widely extended as the earth. GENTILES, as well as JEWS, were to partake of divine blessings through the illustrious channel, the seed of Abraham, the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Fourth. This covenant was confirmed also by the death of Christ.† "Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the Circumcision for the truth of God, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS: and that the GENTILES might glorify God for his mercy, &c." and Jesus is stiled *the Messenger of the Covenant*.‡

Children were *once* entitled to the blessings, and promises, made to the Fathers, and if they are not *now* entitled, is Christ a faithful Messenger? Has he *confirmed*

\* Gen. xxii. 16, 17.    † Rom. xv. 8, 9.    ‡ Mat. iii. 1.

the promises made unto the Fathers? The Apostle explicitly declares, that Abraham's covenant was confirmed in Christ; and that the Levitical law cannot disannul the promise; in those remarkable words.\* "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

Fifth. The leading promise of the covenant declares it a covenant of gospel grace. "I WILL BE A GOD UNTO THEE!" Here Jehovah gives *himself* to his people, and to their seed! What greater blessings could God bestow? Can the *Gospel covenant* ensure a greater?—Can this be stiled, with any propriety, a *carnal covenant*, a mere temporal grant of the Land of Canaan?

Sixth. The blessings, of the Abrahamic covenant, are given to the GENTILES,† "That the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." This, unequivocally, proves that it could not be the peculiar, *national* covenant, afterwards made with Moses, for that was *never* enjoined on the GENTILES.

Seventh. The Abrahamic covenant was the gospel covenant, because the same words are used by the New Testament writers, and applied to the Church of Christ.‡

Here it may be proper to notice, an objection which the Anti-pædobaptists urge against this interpretation, that all the promises made to the *seed* of Abraham, were made to CHRIST personally, and to him only. In the support of which, they plead the expression of Paul. "He saith, not to seeds, as of many, but as of one seed, and to thy

\* Gal. iii, 17.

† Gal. iii, 14.

‡ Ibid.

*seed,*

*seed*, that is Christ."† But if these promises be thus confined, it will follow, that they were not made to the JEWISH Church, any more than to the CHRISTIAN.— Again, this objection operates, as forcibly against *adult believers*, as *their children*; for if the promises belong to *none* but *Christ personally*, then neither believers, nor their children, have any right to them. Hence it follows, that by this expression of Paul, *but of one seed that is Christ*, he must mean Christ *mystical*, or the Church of Christ, consisting of Jesus and Gentiles.\* On any other principle, there is no reconciling it, to the drift of the Apostle in this place, to the promises themselves, of which he is speaking, or to the concurrent sense of scripture.

Now let any serious, candid Reader reflect on these arguments, and let him judge of the truth and propriety of that declaration made by Mr. B.† "Therefore there is no evidence of the offspring of believers having any peculiar relation to Abraham, or of their being more interested in the promises made to his seed, than the children of others." "An absurdity founded on Jewish prejudice."

The argument therefore, drawn from the Abrahamic covenant, may be comprized in the following syllogism:

The seed of Abraham are entitled to the privileges of the Abrahamic covenant.

Children of believers, by virtue of their covenant relation, are the seed of Abraham.

Therefore children are entitled to the privileges of that covenant.

† Gal. iii. 16.

\* Vide 1 Cor. xii. 13.

† Page 10, 11.

Should our opponents, reluctant to admit the idea, of God's entering into covenant with *infants*, and judge it derogatory from the honour of Jehovah; I would reply in the words of a sensible Writer on this subject.\* "There is a very *rational*, and *just* sense, in which God may be said, to establish his covenant with INFANTS. For the scripture expressly says,|| "that he established his covenant with the *cattle*, and the *fowls*; solemnly engaging no more to drown them by a flood." Is there any thing strange, then, or unreasonable, in God's establishing his covenant with *infants*; solemnly engaging to *pour his spirit*, and  *blessing upon them*? Or, that the evils they suffer, in consequence of *Adam's* sin, shall be removed, and amply recompensed, through the righteousness of *Christ*? Most surely not at all. But, if there is a rational, and just sense, in which God may establish his covenant with INFANTS; there is the highest reason to PRESUME that he HAS done it, and that they ARE taken into his covenant: for if he has graciously condescended to establish his covenant with the brute creation, promising no more to deluge them; and appointed a standing *token* or *memorial* of his covenant, viz. *the bow in the clouds*; much more, surely, may we hope, that he has established his covenant with INFANTS, promising to deliver them from the fatal consequences of the fall; and that he has appointed a standing *token* or *sign* of this covenant, to perpetuate its knowledge, and remembrance in the Church."

This covenant being *everlasting*, must be unchangeable.

\* Twogood's Baptism of Infants, a reasonable service, p. 3. note.

|| Gen. ix. 9, &c.



The only alteration therefore, which has taken place by the abolition of the Mosaic ritual, and the introduction of the gospel dispensation, is this, the SEAL is changed. Under the law of Moses, CIRCUMCISION WAS THE SEAL; under the gospel, BAPTISM, being more adapted to the mildness, and simplicity of the dispensation of Christ.

Hence it follows, that if the *Gospel* forbid children, to share in the privileges of their believing parents, IT IS THE ONLY DISPENSATION THAT EVER DID, SINCE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD!

Our next proposition arises out of the preceding.

Second.—Children never have been cast out of this covenant, therefore they have an indisputable right to Baptism as the seal.

I presume, that nothing can be more evident, than that Infants were ONCE in covenant; if so, THEY MUST BE TO THIS DAY. For although the dispensation be altered, and the seal changed, the *essence* of the covenant remains, the privilege of having *God for our God, and the God of our seed!!*

The Anti-pædobaptists call on us to prove that Infants *are now in covenant*. To this we reply, that we have proved that they WERE included in EVERY covenant, which the Lord God has been graciously pleased to make with man, *prior* to the dispensation of the gospel, and therefore, we rationally conclude, that as God is unchangeable, the covenant is everlasting; and, as children are not capable of breaking it, THEY MUST BE STILL CONSIDERED IN COVENANT.

In our turn, we call on them to prove, that they are  
excom-

excommunicated. And we appeal to every man of common sense, whether the proof of this does not rest with *them*.

Nothing can be more clear, than that they HAD a right, and if they have not NOW—HOW, and WHEN, did they forfeit that right? This is a question, which not one of the Adversaries of Infant Baptism, has ever been able to answer. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that Mr. B. has very prudently declined it. It is again asked, “By what authority, do any person refuse Infants the privilege of a covenant relation to God? this privilege God *once* granted, and if it be taken away, WHEN WAS IT? AND FOR WHAT REASON?”

Nay, we will go further, and say that they not only never HAVE forfeited, but never COULD forfeit this privilege; because they were not capable of actual sin, and the Lord God will not break covenant *first*. Again, if Children be cast out of the Church, and be deprived of those privileges to which they were once entitled, by virtue of the faith of their Parents, their exclusion must be the effect of JUDGMENT, or of MERCY. It cannot be of *judgment*, because not being capable of sinning, they could not merit so great a curse, as that of excommunication. And if we allow, that the promise made to the seed of Abraham, contained, or implied any blessing, it will follow, that to be deprived of a right to this promise, is a mark of displeasure. It cannot be in *mercy*, unless we can prove that God has given them a *greater* in its stead: and we again ask with confidence, WHAT IS THAT GREATER MERCY, which God has conferred upon Children, instead of that they have lost? “A

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spiritual

spiritual privilege (says the great Dr. Owen) once granted by God unto any, cannot be changed, disannulled, or abrogated, without a special divine revocation of it, or the substitution of a greater privilege, and mercy in the room of it, for *who shall disannul what God hath granted?* And to say, a privilege so granted, may be revoked, even by God himself, without the substitution of a greater privilege, and mercy in the room of it, is contrary to the goodness of God, his love and care unto his Church; contrary to his constant course of proceeding with it, from the foundation of the world, wherein he went on in the enlargement, and increase of its privileges, until the coming of Christ. And to suppose it under the gospel, is contrary to all his promises, the honour of Christ, and a multitude of express testimonies of scripture.”\*

Let it be observed, that if we deny Infants, a title to the covenant, and to its seal, it would frustrate one grand end of our Lord’s incarnation, and the design of his gospel. Jesus came to *multiply*, not to *diminish* the privileges of the Church. But if the seed of believers, under the gospel, be denied the privilege of covenant mercies, which the children of the Jews enjoyed, this shocking consequence will inevitably follow, that Jesus, who sustained the amiable character of the *Friend of Sinners*, was far from being the *Friend of Infants*, inasmuch, as his coming has excluded them from the covenant, and cast them out into the kingdom of Satan! But why? WHAT EVIL HAVE THEY DONE? Let *those*, who use their pens, and their tongues against those dear LITTLE ONES, answer the question.

\* Dr. Owen’s Tract on Baptism.

We will now attend to the language of the NEW TESTAMENT; and collect what is there said, of the privileges of the infant seed of believers. Not one passage shall we find, which affords the most distant hint, that the covenant relation of children is destroyed. The laws and customs, concerning the admission of Infants into the visible Church, and their receiving the initiating seal, have not been *repealed* by Christ, or his Apostles; had they been repealed, it would have been absolutely necessary to *record* such a memorable transaction; an act which so materially affected every Disciple of Christ. It would have been necessary to record it, because the *Jews* had ever been accustomed, to consider their offspring as in covenant, and a part of the visible Church. They would therefore, continue to view them in the same light, and THEY DID, for they were never informed to the contrary. Nay, Jesus expressly tells them, that he was as willing *as ever*, to receive their Infants, when it is said, † “They brought unto him also Infants, that he would touch them, but when his Disciples saw it they rebuked them: but Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.” If by the term *Kingdom of God*, we understand the *visible Church*, the point is given up; but if it meant *Kingdom of Glory*, then we ask—If the Lord God will admit little Children into the Church *triumphant*, who will dare deny them a place in the Church *militant*? The language of Peter\* is strongly emphatical—*The promise is to you, AND TO YOUR CHILDREN!* These words were

† Luke xviii. 15, 16.

\* Acts ii. 39.



addressed to the Jews, and gave them the firmest assurance, that their Children were considered in the *same* light by God, and entitled to the *same* external privileges, under the gospel dispensation, as they were under that of Moses. None, I think, can deny that this promise does, as plainly, include the seed of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus, as the promise to Abraham, "*I will be a God to thee and unto thy seed.*"

What could the Apostle mean by the promise being unto them, and *unto their Children*? for if they are not in covenant, they have no right to the promise!

This mode of conduct, would make a very unfavourable impression on the minds of Jews, and yield them very poor encouragement to embrace Christianity. You must tell them, that, "notwithstanding your Children have, from the creation of the world, to the present day, been entitled to the same privileges of Church-membership, as yourselves, yet, on your receiving the gospel, your Children must be excluded." But how melancholy these tidings in the ears of every considerate Jew!

A great variety of arguments, might easily be adduced to prove, that children of parents, who profess their belief of Christianity, have an indisputable right to Baptism, as the initiating seal of the covenant of grace.

The following are submitted to the attention of the candid Reader:

First.—Children are members of the visible Church of Christ. *Of such is the kingdom of God*: i. e. the visible Church is the kingdom of God, and children belong to that kingdom. SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN *παιδια & βρεφη* INFANTS; the same word is used concerning Jesus in

in the manger, and translated "*babe*." These babes were brought to Jesus, (not to be healed of bodily diseases) but to be *bleſſed*; therefore children are capable of receiving ſpiritual bleſſings. The Diſciples were culpable in attempting to forbid them, and ſo, I preſume, are all thoſe now, who act a ſimilar part. The queſtion was, Whether children might be brought to Jeſus to receive his bleſſing? He replies—by all means; for they are members of the Church, and therefore I am concerned for them, they belong to my fold, and as the Shepherd, I am to take care of them. Accordingly, he took them up in his arms and bleſſed them. True; he did not baptize them (for he baptized none.†) But he did that which was equal to it, he took them up in his arms, and declared them *members of his kingdom*. As Chriſt gave them the *thing ſignified* by baptiſm, we are juſtified in giving them the *ſign*; for as Dr. Owen juſtly obſerves, "They who have the thing ſignified have a right to the ſign of it." The moſt rigid oppoſer of Infant Baptiſm, will not venture to ſay that the children of believing parents, *are not capable* of receiving that grace, which is ſignified in Baptiſm. Nay, it is certain that ſome children are actually partakers of the grace of regeneration, i. e. all ſuch who die in infancy, if not, they muſt periſh without hope; therefore ſuch have a right to Baptiſm. Be it obſerved alſo, that Infants are created for an eternal duration, and are capable of enjoying eternal happineſs, or ſuffering eternal miſery; and at death, muſt paſs into one or other of thoſe ſtates: and as all infants are children of wrath, and under the curſe, unleſs they are regene-

† John iv. 2.

rated, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God: Now, as regeneration is that, which is signified by Baptism, it follows that children ought to be baptized.

Secondly.—Children are relatively holy, therefore they ought to be baptized. There is a two-fold holiness spoken of in scripture, a personal holiness, or sanctification of the spirit, and a *federal or relative holiness*.—For the latter, we plead in behalf of our children, on the ground of the Apostle's assertion.\* “Else where your children unclean, but now they are holy.” To settle the meaning of the terms, *unclean and holy*, we must have recourse to scripture. The great Mr. Locke, in his commentary says, “By holy, is meant that relative holiness, whereby any thing, hath an *appropriation* to God.”—The term *αγιος* is used in the same sense as it is, when applied to the Jews as *a nation*—to the temple, and the various utensils, i. e. they were separated to a holy use, devoted to the service of God. Thus, the word *αναθαρρος* is used to signify, persons out of the pale of the visible Church, not devoted to God. Therefore the Septuagint apply this word to the Heathen.† “The unclean *αναθαρρος* shall not pass over it.” In this sense also does Peter use the term.‡ “God hath shewed me, that I should not call any man, common, or unclean.” *αναθαρρον λεγειν ανθρωπον*. Our Baptist brethren, with a view to avoid the force of the argument, arising from the relative holiness of children, in consequence of the faith of the parent, contend, that the term *holy*, means legitimate: as if the Apostle had said, “If but *one* of the parents is a believer, your children are *legitimate*, but if neither—then they

\* 1 Cor. vii. 14.

† Isa. xxxv. 8.

‡ Acts. i. 28.

are all BASTARDS. This is the necessary result of confining the meaning of the term *holy*, to that of *legitimacy*; an absurdity too glaring to be cherished for a moment!

We assert, on the authority of that keen disputant, Mr. Baxter, that the word *holy*, is used near six hundred times in scripture, for a *relative holiness*, and a *separation to God*, and NEVER once used for *legitimacy*. The Apostle Paul reasons in the same manner, when he says,\* “For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.” Hence we conclude, that children are made partakers of *federal holiness*, as well as the parents, and that therefore, they are entitled to Baptism.

Thirdly.—Baptism came in the stead of circumcision. It has been observed above, that God made a covenant with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the *national* covenant with Israel, and appointed circumcision as its seal. And here let it be remarked, that as soon as Abraham was circumcised, all his Children, his household, were made partakers of the same sign; which is a convincing proof, that his Children were considered as included in the same covenant. Now, by the establishment of the gospel dispensation, the Mosaic economy, and consequently circumcision, is abolished, and Baptism is instituted in its room. This appears clear from the language of Paul.† “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Here it is worthy our notice, that the Apostle † calls *the gospel* (in opposition to the law) *the righteousness which is of faith*.

\* Rom. xi. 16.

† Rom. iv. 11.

† Chap. x. 6.

Again



Again we observe,

That the *design* of both ordinances, (Circumcision and Baptism) is the same, viz. A DEDICATION TO GOD, and our relation to him, by an external and visible covenant. As in circumcision, the child was dedicated to God, and laid under an obligation to observe all the statutes, and ordinances of that dispensation, so in baptism, the subject is devoted to the Lord Jesus, and thereby bound to love, honour, and obey him; whence it is reasonable to suppose that the one succeeded the other. As there were two seals to the covenant of Grace, under the Old Testament, so there must be under the New: And if Baptism do not come in the room of circumcision, there is no ordinance, that can be considered as such; consequently *one seal* must have been lost, and the Christian Church is inferior, in point of privilege, to the Jewish, whereas "*the law was only a shadow of good things to come.*"

Fourthly.—None should be denied the benefit of ordinances, who have neither an actual, nor a moral incapacity for receiving the benefits thereof; Children have no such incapacity, therefore they are to be admitted into the visible Church of Christ by Baptism.

They are not *actually* incapable, for the Children of the Jews, were judged by God, to be capable of sustaining a covenant relation, and received the seal thereof, and it would be absurd to suppose, that the Children of Christian parents are less capable, or less worthy than *they* were.

They are not *morally* incapable, for they have never sinned, and God has promised to bless them.\* "I will

\* Isaiah xliv. 3.

pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." They cannot therefore be supposed, in any one instance, to have forfeited their right to a visible relation to God.

But we will advance one step further on this ground, and affirm that Children *are capable* of receiving the greatest blessing, which God ever bestowed on mortals, of having GOD AS THEIR GOD! They are capable of acceptance with God, capable of justification, and sanctification, (which, according to the Baptist principles) are necessary to baptism. "Hence then it follows, that if they are capable of receiving those qualifications, which are requisite for the *most important* privilege of salvation, they, unquestionably, are capable of those, which are requisite for the *less important* privilege of baptism. For if the one be denied, so may the other. Infants are capable of a divinely constituted *union* with the infinitely worthy Saviour, not less than adults; and are they incapable of the *symbol* of that union? Infants are capable of the influences of the Holy Spirit, not less than adults; and are they incapable of the *symbol* of those influences? He that can believe it, let him believe it."\*

Should it be asked, *What benefit do Children receive from Baptism?* I reply, as much as the Children of the Jews from circumcision. Children are capable of answering *some* of the ends of Baptism, though not *all*: They can be admitted as disciples into the school of Christ, and as subjects of his kingdom, which is the very *first* design of Baptism. Children are considered as subjects of Great Britain, although they are not capable, at

\* Dr. Williams, vol. 1. p. 210.

present, of answering *every* end, and fulfilling *every* duty of a subject. The Children of Freemen are free, altho' infants are not capable of discharging *every* duty, and performing *every* act of freemen. "Let it be remembered, (as Mr. Henry says) that a lease of a covenant between a landlord and a tenant, may be of use to a child, though he does not understand it; nay, though when he grows up, he may forfeit the benefit of it." There are many instances, in which Infant Baptism has been abundantly blessed: The pious Author, just quoted, says, "For my own part, I publicly express my gratitude to God for my Infant Baptism, not only as it was an early admission into the visible body of Christ, but as it furnished my pious parents, with a good argument (and I trust, through grace, a prevailing argument) for an early dedication of myself to God, in my Childhood. If God has wrought any good work upon my soul, I desire, with humble thankfulness, to acknowledge, the MORAL INFLUENCE OF MY INFANT BAPTISM UPON IT."†— And should children, who were baptized in their infancy, forsake the Lord, the guilt of the breach of the covenant, does not rest on the parent, but on the children.

Thus I conceive, that the right of the Infants of Believers, stands firm, on the ground of their covenant relation to God, and therefore I conclude, that they ought to be baptized. It is impossible for them, who deny this conclusion, to produce *one instance*, in the New Testament, of a person professing the Christian religion, who delayed the Baptism of his Children, until they arrived at maturity. Nor is there one instance, in which a Child

† Henry on Baptism, page 118.

who has been baptized in infancy, was baptized a SECOND TIME in adult age. If our Opponents can produce one such instance, sanctioned by the COMMAND OF GOD, or by SCRIPTURE EXAMPLE, we will cheerfully give up the point, submit to immersion, and suffer our *little ones* (however dear to us) to be cut off from all share in covenant blessings, and cast out of the visible Church of Christ. But no such instance has ever been produced, neither will it be; for the inspired Writers of the New Testament, inform us, that when a *Jewish*, or a *Gentile* parent embraced Christianity, not the parent *only*, but *all his children* were admitted also, by Baptism. Thus we are informed, that LYDIA and her household; CORNELIUS and his family: the JAILOR and his household were baptized.

A late Writer among the Anti-pædobaptists takes it for granted, that there were no Infants in the Jailor's house, because it is said, that the Apostles *preached* the word to all in his house. If this reasoning be just, then we may fairly infer, that there was not an Infant among the multitudes to whom John preached; for it is said that John preached the baptism of repentance to *all* the people of Israel. Besides, the following passage translated literally, would read thus: "He believing in God, rejoiced all the house over." *Και ηγαλλιασατο πανοικια πεπιστευκως* Ιω. θει.— Now it is evident, that the participle *singular* *πεπιστευκως* cannot express the faith of the Jailor, and of all in his house, which would have required a verb or participle *plural*. And it is remarkable, that (according to Dr. Guyse) the Syriac version, when speaking of Lydia, reads the passage thus: "*The Children of her house were* baptized,"



*baptized*," which shews, at least, that in those early times, Children were deemed such parts of the household as were baptized.†

It was the opinion of Dr. Lightfoot, that it had been a well-known, and long-continued custom among the Jews, to admit Profelytes into the Church of Israel, by baptizing them, and their whole families, *inclusive of their Infants*: and therefore, that the expression, "Lydia and her household," refers to that custom.\*

Thus the Lord God of Heaven, has manifested a peculiar regard to Children in every age. Jesus, with divine tendernefs, took them up in his arms, and blessed them. He gave commission to his Apostles, *to feed his lambs*; and from the creation of the world, to the present day, they have been included in every covenant; and entitled to every benefit, contained in those solemn engagements, to which their parents were entitled.

Hence it follows,

Thirdly.—It is both unkind, and unwarrantable to deny Children a right to Baptism, as the initiating seal of the covenant, since they cannot have forfeited their covenant relation to God.

I have never considered this subject as essential to salvation, whether administered in *infancy*, or in *adult* age; whether by *sprinkling*, or by *dipping*. Yet I hold myself bound, to plead the cause of (what I conceive to be) truth with firmness; and ever to consider the loss of private friendship, as not deserving a moment's attention, when put in competition with it; especially when that loss is procured, by no other conduct, than that of SELF-DEFENCE.

† Guyse in Lac;

\* Lightfoot's Harmony.

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Influenced by these motives, I proceed to observe, that it is unkind and unwarrantable, to deny Children a right to Baptism, as an initiating seal of the covenant.—

It is *unkind*; since they partake of the *corruptions* of their parents, would we deprive them of their *privileges*?

It is *unkind*; because it weakens the hope of the salvation of Infants. I do not intimate that all Infants, because of their Baptism, are saved. But the argument is this: Those who deny Infant Baptism, deny it, because they are not *now* in covenant, and because they are *incapable* of answering the end and design of Baptism.— Now if this be true, there can be no ground, on which to found our hopes of their salvation. For if God deny Baptism to Children, it is because they are incapable of receiving that, which is signified by Baptism, *his grace*; consequently, the inevitable result is, THEY MUST PERISH!!

But if our Opponents will acknowledge, that Infants are capable of receiving the grace of God, then we assert, that they have an equal claim to Baptism, as the sign, with believers themselves. Mr. B. says, “the future happiness of *all dying* Infants, without distinction, is that, which meets my most firm, and cordial belief.” And then, in the plenitude of his benevolence, adds, “IF ANY of my Pædobaptist friends are of the same opinion, I REJOICE.”

I am happy to remove the doubt, which hangs on Mr. B's mind, and to assure him, that he is by no means *solitary*, in his benevolent belief. This sentiment, which is so honourable to the blessed God, and is not subversive of one gospel doctrine, has been “*my most firm and cordial*”

cordial belief," ever since I have been capable of thinking, with any propriety, on subjects of religion. It is the sentiment of a very large majority of Pædobaptists: and is much more consistent with *our* general principles, than with the principles of our Opponents. For we believe, that all Infants are delivered from the condemning power of *original* guilt, by virtue of the precious, and efficacious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; consequently, as every Infant dying in that state, is received into the Church *triumphant*, we believe that every surviving Infant ought to be admitted into the Church *militant*, as soon as either of the parents declares his, or her belief of the Christian religion. But the Advocates for adult Baptism, reason thus: None are to be baptized but those, who are capable of faith, and repentance; Infants are not capable, therefore are not to be baptized. From this mode of reasoning we justly retort, if faith and repentance are absolutely necessary to salvation, Infants are not capable of believing or repenting, consequently they cannot be saved. Hence it follows, that as Mr. B. cordially believes the salvation of "ALL DYING INFANTS WITHOUT DISTINCTION," he is not indebted to his *Anti-pædobaptist* principles, for this benevolent article of his faith.—Again,

To deny Infants a right to Baptism, is *unwarrantable*; because it diminishes the Church of Christ, by excluding more than nineteen parts in twenty, from the Christian world.

It is *unwarrantable*; because it is excommunicating those, who, IN EVERY AGE, were entitled to this relation, and who were confirmed in their privilege by our  
Lord

Lord Jesus Christ. It is doing that, for which they have no authority, and appears to be little less, than an assumption of the divine prerogative.

I shall add but one remark more, under this proposition,

*It is unwarrantable; BECAUSE IT IS CONTRARY TO THE CUSTOM OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ALL AGES.*

It is granted, that as the subject in debate, is a matter of fact, an appeal to the custom of antiquity, and the testimony of Authors, who flourished in the earliest ages, is highly proper. For if the Churches established by the Apostles, admitted Infants into their societies by baptism, it must have been a fact KNOWN TO ALL: or if they uniformly denied the right of Infants, this must have been EQUALLY NOTORIOUS.

I proceed then to examine the truth of Mr. B's assertion,\* "THERE IS NO CERTAIN EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER THAT BABES WERE BAPTIZED ANY WHERE, OR BY ANY ONE, FOR THE SPACE OF TWO HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST."

It is observable, that this position, like almost all others of the Anabaptists on this subject, is of the *negative* kind. To render the argument conclusive, I conceive it ought to run thus: *There is certain evidence that no babe was baptized, any where, or by any one, for the space of two hundred years after the birth of Jesus Christ.* But on reflection, it is probable, that Mr. B. applies Tertullian's sagacious maxim, to the writings of the FATHERS, as well as to the writings of the APOS-

\* Page 13.



TLES, "THE FATHERS FORBID, WHAT THEY DO NOT MENTION."

The testimonies of the following persons, who were the immediate successors of the Apostles, I beg leave to place in opposition to the assertion of my Opponent.

JUSTIN MARTYR flourished about forty years after the time of the Apostles, and died A. D. 167. In his Apology he has these remarkable words.†—*Και πολλοί &c. εκ παιδων εμαθητευθησαν τω Χριστω.* "Many of sixty or seventy years of age, were made Disciples to Christ from their Infancy." Now this Writer uses the same word, as Jesus did in his command to his Apostles: *Go and disciple all nations, εμαθητευσαι.* And to be made Disciples of Christ, from their Infancy, I think could mean nothing less, than that they were admitted by Baptism, into the Church, or School of Christ.

IRENÆUS was a Greek Bishop of Lyons, and put to death A. D. 203. He was cotemporary with Polycarp, who was the Disciple of John the <sup>Apostle</sup> ~~Baptist~~, and wrote about sixty-seven years after the Apostle. Now, if he be found to speak of the Baptism of Infants, it may be presumed, that it was the practice of the APOSTOLIC Church. That he does, will appear evident from his own words §—*Omnes enim venit, per semetipsum salvare, omnes, inquam per eum, RENASCUNTER IN DEUM, INFANTES et PARVULOS, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores.* "He (i. e. Christ) came to save all persons by himself; all, I say, who by him are regenerated unto God, Infants, and little ones, and young men, and aged persons."

† Justin Martyr's Apol. 1<sup>a</sup>.

§ Lib. adver. Hæreses, II. cap. 39.

The phrase, *regenerated unto God*, is constantly used, by the Writers of that age, for Baptism. And for the truth of this interpretation, we appeal to the judgment of our learned Opponents.

This affords another proof, that Infant Baptism was the practice of the Apostolic Church, because this Writer, who was born several years *before* the death of the Apostle JOHN, cannot be supposed to have been ignorant of the opinion, and the practice of the Apostles, concerning a subject of so much importance.

The testimony of TERTULLIAN, may also, be very properly adduced, in favour of Infant Baptism. This Author, who died A. D. 216, advises Parents to defer the Baptism of their Infants until a certain period, "UNLESS IN CASE OF NECESSITY, OR DANGER OF DEATH!" This advice, unanswerably proves, that the Baptism of Infants was the universal practice of Christians in *his* time.

These are the testimonies in favour of Infant Baptism, which are to be found in the writings of this, very early period of the Church, and are sufficient to overthrow the assertion of Mr. B. "*that there is no evidence of this practice for the space of two hundred years after the birth of Christ.*"

The probable reason, why we have no more ample, and repeated testimonies on this subject, immediately after the Apostolic age, without presumption, we may conclude to be this; the right of Infants to Baptism was never called in question, and no disputes had, at that time, arisen in the Church on the subject.

This is supported by the more frequent and express

testimonies, given by the Writers in the succeeding ages, as soon as error began to shew its head.

About this time arose ORIGEN, who was born A. D. 185, when a dispute was agitated concerning original sin; some asserted that Infants were not tainted by Adam's transgression, while others maintained that they were.—Origen embraced the latter opinion, and reasoning on this subject, he asks—“*What is the reason, that, whereas the Baptism of the Church, is instituted for the forgiveness of sins, INFANTS ALSO BY THE USAGE OF THE CHURCH ARE BAPTIZED, when if there was nothing in Infants which wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of Baptism would be needless to them?*”† In another treatise, he expresses himself more fully, (if possible) when he says, “*For this also it was, that the Church had, FROM THE APOSTLES A TRADITION, OR ORDER TO GIVE BAPTISM ALSO TO INFANTS.*”\*

The next testimony that presents itself, is that of CYPRIAN, who was converted to Christianity A. D. 240. In his time arose one *Fidus*, an African Bishop, who denied original sin, and was of opinion, that the Baptism of Infants should be deferred until the *eighth day*.

On this occasion, a council of sixty-six Bishops was convened at Carthage, A. D. 253, of which CYPRIAN was chosen president. And the result of their deliberations, was this; they were *unanimously* of opinion, that the Baptism of Infants *was not* to be deferred until the eighth day: And the decree which they passed on this occasion, closes with these memorable words:—“*Wherefore, dearly beloved, it is our opinion, that from*

† Hom. 8, in Levit. cap. 12.

\* Comments in Epis. Rom:

*Baptism,*

*Baptism, and the grace of God, who is kind and benign to all, none ought to be prohibited by us; which as it is to be observed with respect to ALL, SO ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO INFANTS, AND THOSE WHO ARE BUT JUST BORN, who deserve our help, and the divine mercy."*†

ST. AMBROSE, according to Mr. B's quotation, "*was not baptized until the full age of a man, or more.*" If this be true, then he acted contrary to the practice of the Apostles, as he himself testifies. "*The Baptism of Infants was the practice of the Apostles themselves, and of the Church until now.*" St. Ambrose lived about 274 years from the time of the Apostles.

ST. AUGUSTIN, who lived A. D. 370, was frequently engaged in a controversy with PELAGIUS, who strongly opposed the doctrine of original sin. St. Augustin insists that Children are polluted by original sin, and therefore urges the necessity of baptizing them, saying, "*why are Infants baptized for the remission of sin, if they have none?*" Now, unquestionably, if Infant Baptism had not been the invariable practice of the Church, Pelagius would have immediately and gladly fled to this refuge. But so far from pleading this, he considers it as a gross calumny cast on him, to say, that he denied Infant Baptism. On the contrary, he says, "We confess, that Infants ought to be baptized for the remission of sins, ACCORDING TO THE RULE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, AND ACCORDING TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLES." At another time he says, "Nunquam se, vel impium aliquem Hæreticum, audisse qui hoc quod proposuit de parvulis diceret;" i. e. "THAT HE NEVER HAD HEARD

† Cyprian Ep. ad Fidum. Ep. 64.



OF ANY ONE, NOT EVEN AN IMPIOUS HERETIC, WHO WOULD SAY SUCH A THING OF LITTLE CHILDREN."

The testimony of the renowned CALVIN, A. D. 1509, is also full to the point.† "Now every one must see that the Baptism of Infants, which is supported by such a body of scriptural evidence, was in no respect of human invention. It is foolishly trifling to object, that we never find, that even one Infant was baptized by the hands of the Apostles. For though it be not expressly mentioned by the Evangelists, yet as they are never excluded, whenever an account is given of any family's being baptized; who then, but a mad man, would thence infer, that they were not baptized? If arguments of that kind were of force, by a parity of reason, women should be forbidden to partake of the Lord's supper, as we do not read that they were admitted to it, in the time of the Apostles; but here we are satisfied with the rule of faith. For when we consider the design of the institution, we can easily determine, who are to be the subjects of it; which we observe also in Baptism. For if we reflect on the end for which it was instituted, we evidently see that it is not less suitable for Infants, than for adults. And therefore they cannot be deprived of it, without doing manifest injustice to the will of its divine Author. But whereas they disseminate a report among the simple common people, that a long series of years had elapsed, after the resurrection of Christ, in which the Baptism of Infants was unknown, they are guilty of the basest falsehood.\* FOR THERE IS NO WRITER, HOWEVER AN-

† Calvin's Instit. Lib. IV. Cap. XY. Sect. 19.

\* Fœdissime mentiuntur.

GIENT, WHO DOES NOT CERTAINLY REFER THE ORIGIN OF IT TO THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES."

Many other testimonies might be brought forward, but a greater number would needlessly swell this treatise.†

On the review however, we may maintain, that no historical fact, can be more honourably, and more uniformly supported than this, that from the time of the Apostles, to the year 410, the Baptism of Infants, was the UNIVERSAL PRACTICE of the Church: for PELAGIUS, (who lived about that time, and who would most gladly have denied it, could he have done it, with any prospect of success) as we have shewn, expressly avows it. And no one, was better qualified to decide on the practice of the Churches than himself: for though he was born in Britain, yet he was a considerable time at Carthage, in Africa, and at Jerusalem, and had travelled through all the noted Greek and Eastern Churches in Europe and Asia. And Dr. WALL has abundantly proved; that from the year of our Lord 400 to 1100, no society of men, in all that period of seven hundred years, ever pretended to say, that it was unlawful to baptize Infants. "As these evidences are for the first four hundred years, in which there appears only one man, TERTULLIAN, that advised the delay of Infant Baptism IN

† Those who wish to see this fact established by the concurrent testimony of the ancient Fathers, will be highly entertained by a perusal of Mr. TUNNICLIFFE's admirable pamphlet, entitled, "The Baptism of Infants, a reasonable service," especially Argum. V. from which, I readily confess, a great part of the above testimonies is extracted, not having the original Authors in my possession, nor within my reach. The curious and learned Reader will be gratified by consulting Mr. WALL, whose labours have done him honour, and thrown great light on this subject.

SOME

SOME CASES; and one GREGORY, that did perhaps practise such delay in the case of his children: But no society of men, so thinking, or so practising; nor any one man, saying it was unlawful to baptize Infants: So in the next seven hundred years, there is not so much as one man to be found, that either spoke for, or practised any such delay, BUT ALL THE CONTRARY. And when about the year 1130, one sect among the Waldenses declared against the baptizing of Infants, as being incapable of salvation, the main body of that people rejected that their opinion, and they of them, that held that opinion, quickly dwindled away, and disappeared, there being no more heard of, holding that tenet, till the rising of the German Anabaptists, anno 1522. ALL THE NATIONAL CHURCHES NOW IN THE WORLD, DO PROFESS, AND PRACTISE INFANT BAPTISM.†”

As Mr. B. has said so much on the genealogy of the Anabaptists, it may be necessary for me to pay some attention to it also. On which subject, I cannot refer to an Author of higher respectability than MOSHEIM.\*

As Mr. B.‡ has set the example, he cannot be offended at my tracing up the origin of the Anabaptists to that sect, which made its appearance in the 16th century, of whom Mosheim says, “The true origin of that sect, which acquired the denomination of *Anabaptists*, by their administering *anew*, the rite of Baptism, to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of *Menno-nites*, from the famous man, to whom they owe the greatest part of their felicity, is hid in the remotest depths

† Dr. Wall's Hist. of Inf. Bapt. part II. cap. 10.

\* Eccles. History, Vol. IV. p. 129.

‡ Page 13, 14.

of antiquity, and is, of consequence, extremely difficult to be ascertained."

This Author observes, "That the Mennonites are not entirely mistaken, when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, and Petrobrussians—and before the time of the reformation, many of this sect lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe. However, among them were persons of different ways of thinking—some were of a fanatical complexion; and others of a more prudent, and rational turn of mind. The views and hopes of these people were revived by *Luther*, but at length they forsook him, not satisfied with the plan of reformation proposed by him.

"The most pernicious faction, of all those that composed this motley multitude, was that which pretended that the founders of the new, and perfect Church, were under a divine impulse, and were armed against all opposition by the power of working miracles. It was this detestable faction, that, in the year 1621, began their fanatical work, and excited the most unhappy tumults and commotions in Saxony, and the adjacent countries.—But at length, this seditious croud was routed, and dispersed by the Elector of Saxony. *MUNZER*, their ring-leader, was put to death in an ignominious manner, and his factious counsellors scattered. In this critical situation, they derived much comfort, and assistance from the counsels, and zeal of *MENNO SIMON*, a native of Friesland, who had formerly been a Popish Priest, and, as he himself confesses, a notorious profligate. This man went over to the Anabaptists—he was a man of genius, though not of a very sound judgment. By his prudence, probity,



probity, meekness, and eloquence, he was rendered very successful. He drew up a plan of doctrine and discipline of a much more mild, and moderate nature, than that of the furious, and fanatical Anabaptists, which had been a curse to every nation where they were found, and a disgrace to human nature."

Hence I observe, that although the assertion of the Author of that Pamphlet, was not strictly correct, "that Menno was the *first person* that denied Infant Baptism," yet it is a stubborn fact, that although there were individuals, for several preceding years, such as PETER DE BRUIS, ARNOLD, and some others, who denied Infant Baptism, yet, until MENNO arose, there were no *regular and settled Societies* of Anabaptists, (except those impious and fanatical sects, from whom no persons in the present day, would wish to trace their descent) "HENCE (says Mosheim) HE IS DESERVEDLY LOOKED UPON AS THE COMMON CHIEF OF ALMOST ALL THE ANA-BAPTISTS, AND THE PARENT OF THE SECT, THAT STILL SUBSISTS UNDER THAT DENOMINATION."†

By the allusion made to the conduct of the Anabaptists in Germany, I hope it will not be considered, as implying any reflection on their descendants, of the present day, as if they were actuated by the same spirit, and their principles were tending to produce the same excesses; I mean no such thing. I freely acknowledge, that many of the Baptist persuasion, are ornaments to religion. Their piety and learning demand the affection and reverence of the age. Neither should I have recalled to memory those transactions, which disgraced religion, had

not Mr. B. rendered it necessary, by his tracing the subject up to its origin, in the large quotation which he has made from Du Pin.

Here, then, we cheerfully leave it with the Reader of reflection, and impartiality, to determine, on which side the weight of evidence preponderates.

I now proceed to the second part of my design.

Secondly—to consider the *MODE* in which Baptism may be administered, agreeably to the word of God, and the practice of the Church of Christ.

This part of the subject, has been so frequently discussed, and is thereby involved in so much perplexity, that the generality of readers, are scarcely able to perceive the real subject of dispute, between the Pædobaptists, and the Anti-pædobaptists. I shall therefore endeavour, to be as concise, and explicit as possible.—“We believe Baptism to be a Christian ordinance, which implies a ceremonial *PURIFICATION BY WATER*.—The proximate genus, is *purification*, the specific difference is, that it is a purification by a *ceremonial or religious use of water*.”† And I most cordially agree with Dr. Williams, when he says, “I maintain, that the proper sacramental import of the word *Baptismus*, in the New Testament, is exhausted by this definition.” Hereby it will be easily perceived, that all which we plead for is, *the religious use of water, in the Christian ordinance of Baptism*. We contend, that the *MODE* of administering this ordinance, whether by sprinkling, pouring, or dipping, is a *circumstance only*, and does not enter into the

† Dr. Williams, Vol. II. p. 369.

*essence*, or affect the design of our Lord in the institution of Baptism. We do not deny that the original word has been frequently used, by profane Authors, to denote washing by dipping. All we contend for is, that the word does not signify to *dip* ONLY, by a total immersion; and we affirm, that the sacrament of Baptism is as valid, and scriptural, when administered by sprinkling, or pouring water upon the subject, as by plunging the body wholly under water.

On the other hand, our Opponents contend, that the original term signifies to dip, and THAT ONLY; and consequently, that cannot be scriptural Baptism, which does not *immerse the subject* totally under water. "If the Anabaptists (says an acute Writer\*) were content with maintaining their particular mode, only as the favourite badge of their party, without insisting on it, as the *essence* of the sacrament, our controversy would be instantaneously at an end." But as so much importance is attached to this distinguishing *mode*, it becomes us to make our appeal.

1st. Therefore, let us examine the true meaning of the original terms. The word used by our Lord, when he gave the commission to the Disciples, after his resurrection, is βαπτίζω. This is a diminutive derived from βάπτω. And Lexicographers agree in saying, that the primitive idea of this word is to WASH. This is done, sometimes by *dipping*, sometimes by *pouring* water, and sometimes by *sprinkling*. "And here it is observable, that of the two-and-twenty instances where this word is found, *not one* is inconsistent with its being, in its primary meaning,

\* Mr. De Courcy Rejoin'd, p. 126.

a *generic term*, signifying to **TINGE**; whereas in *six* instances at least, if I am not much mistaken, the specific notion of immersion is excluded."\*

Let us see in what sense the sacred Writers of the New Testament use the word βαπτω. "Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger."† "And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood."‡ In each of these places the word βαπτω is used; and it is evident, that in *neither* place is it used for *total immersion*; and certainly all must acknowledge, that when applied to the vesture of Jesus, it must convey the idea of *sprinkled or stained*. Let it be remembered, that this word is *never* used with respect to the ordinance of Baptism! The word βαπτίζω is used by Christ in his commission, and by the Apostles, when they speak of Baptism. And in the words of that learned Critic Dr. Owen,‡ we assert, "that no one instance can be given in scripture, wherein βαπτίζω doth necessarily signify either to *dip* or *plunge*. It doth NOT signify, PROPERLY to dip or plunge, for that in Greek is μεβαπτω and μεβαπτίζω. It no where signifies to *dip*, but as a MODE of, and in *order* to washing. I must say, and will make it good, that no honest man, who understands the Greek tongue, can deny the word to signify to *wash*, as well as to dip."

If we consult the learned Commentators of Antiquity, we shall find them all agreeing, that the primary signification of the term is *washing*. Now it is clear, that this act of washing, may be performed, either by *dipping*, by *sprinkling*, or by *pouring water*, and each of these must

\* Dr. Williams, Vol. II. p. 54.

† Luke xvi. 24.

‡ Rev. xix. 13.

‡ Collect. of Tracts, p. 581.



be considered as a *secondary* idea attached to the word. So that *that* man would act as absurdly who *confined* the meaning of the word baptize, or wash, to the act of *sprinkling* or *pouring*, as another who *confined* it to *dipping*; for the term baptize unquestionably is *equivocal*, and is used for washing, sometimes in *one* sense, at other times in *another*. This statement of the case will account for the *apparent* disagreement on this subject, between Authors equally learned: And this disagreement, is not so much in the Authors themselves, as in the Writers, who quote them. For when the Advocates for immersion, refer to an Author, it is too common with them to take *one sense only*, such as serves their *own* purpose. In this manner, has Mr. B. quoted CALVIN and BEZA.† “*The renowned Calvin testifies: The word baptize signifies to immerse; and the rite of immersion was used by the ancient Church.*” But does this venerable and learned Father say nothing more? Yes; but Mr. B’s reason for going no further in the quotation, is evident. The FIRST PART of that sentence, which Mr. B. has quoted, runs thus, “But whether the person baptized be wholly plung’d, and that, once or thrice, or whether he be only *sprinkled* with water poured upon him, IS OF VERY LITTLE IMPORTANCE, but in this, Churches ought to be left at liberty to act, according to the difference of countries.”\*

Thus, this great man, when permitted to speak for himself, says no more, than what many intelligent Pædobaptists will readily say; and would Mr. B. cordially acquiesce in this sentiment of Calvin, “that the *mode of*

† Page 18.

\* Calvin’s Instit. Lib. XV. Sect. 19.

applying water in Baptism, is of VERY LITTLE IMPORTANCE," our controversy would immediately cease.

Again, Mr. B. introduces BEZA, as saying, "*Christ commanded us to be baptized; by which words it is certain, immersion is signified.*" But this learned Commentator, also says,† "The reality of Baptism is the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ* for the remission of sins, and the imputation of his righteousness, which are as it were displayed before our eyes in the sign of outward sprinkling.

ARE THEY THEREFORE IMPROPERLY BAPTIZED, WHO ARE SPRINKLED WITH WATER ONLY CAST ON THEM? No." This same Author is quoted by Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*, (in Marg.) as expressing himself thus, on Mark vii. 4. "Except they wash βαπτίζωται, i. e. are baptized. Loti fuerint vulg. baptizentur, i. e. they washed, or made their hands wet, by pouring water upon them," as is the custom of the Jews to this day. Thus the cause of immersion is not much assisted by either of these great men, when their testimony is fairly stated.

The opinion also of Dr. Featly,\* may be adduced as of considerable consequence. He says, "Christ no where requires dipping, but only baptizing; which word imports no more than ablution or washing, which may be done without dipping, as Hesychius, Stephanus, Scapula, and Budæus, the great masters of the Greek tongue, make good by very many instances, and allegations out of classic writers."

Having mentioned that eminent sacred critic Leigh, it may be deemed strange, if I bring not forward his testi-

† Annotat. Matt. iii. 11.

\* Leigh's Crit. Sac. in Loc.

mony.

mony. On the word βαπτίζω, he says, "The word baptize, though it be derived from βαπτω tingo, to dip or plunge into the water; and signifieth primarily, such a kind of washing, as is used in *Bucks*, where linen is plunged and dipt; yet it is taken more largely, for any kind of washing, rinsing, or cleansing, even where there is *no dipping at all*: as, "he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;"§ and many other places. This is all that we contend for, that the word *baptize* does not necessarily mean dipping, to the exclusion of any *other mode* of washing, by the application of water, either by sprinkling or pouring.

These are the opinions of the learned on the primary meaning of the word: and many more might have been brought forward. But, my Opponent ventures to place *his* opinion, in opposition to the decision of *all* the learned, of ancient and modern times; and, with a masterly stroke, closes at once, all possibility of any further dispute; for he says,\* "DIPPING IS COMMANDED IN ALL THOSE PLACES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHERE BAPTISM IS ENJOIN'D!!!"

Thus all the learned labour of ages, is swept away with one stroke, "*Baptism is dipping!*" But notwithstanding this point is so authoritatively decided by Mr. B. I shall presume in the next place,

2nd—To examine the propriety of *confining* the word Baptism, to the act of *dipping*, in those places where it is used in sacred scriptures. Here I perfectly agree in the opinion of a late Writer,† "that the point

§ Matt. iii. 11. and chap. xx. 22.

\* Page 18.

† Elliott's dipping, not baptizing, chap. 2.

in dispute *entirely* hinges on this—*In what sense the SCRIPTURE uses this word*: whether to dip a person *in*, or *under* water, or to *wash* him with water: Is it not then impertinent for any one still to urge, in Homer, Plutarch, &c. it signifies to *dip* or *plunge*; FOR WHO DENIES IT? The point in dispute hinges on this; has it *always* that sense and no other? for else it proves nothing against us; especially if this be not its *constant meaning throughout the scripture*. But the inspired Writers of the Old and New Testaments, do no where, in my opinion, intend by the word baptize, to express *merely*, or *chiefly*, an act of immersion or dipping, and much less to dip *under* water; but rather that of *washing* or *sprinkling*."

I shall now, endeavour to collect those passages in the New Testament, wherein the word Baptism is mentioned, and shall examine whether in *all*, or in *any* of them, it must NECESSARILY mean *dipping* and *plunging*, to the *entire exclusion of sprinkling or pouring*.

Matthew iii. 11. I indeed baptize, i. e. *dip* you with water, but he that cometh after me shall baptize (dip) you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The manner in which the Disciples were baptized by the Holy Ghost, was by the sacred emblem hanging over, and resting on their heads in the shape of cloven tongues. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Chap. xx. 22. Jesus said, are ye able to be baptized (*dipped*) with the baptism (*dipping*) that I am baptized (*dipped*) with?

Mark



Mark vii. 4. And when they come from the market, except they wash, (*Βαπτίζονται* baptize) or agreeably to our Opponent's mode of rendering the word, except they *dip* or *plunge* themselves; "and many other things there be, which they have received to hold, such as the washings (dippings) of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables," (or more properly) beds. It is absurd to suppose that the Jews plunged themselves under water, before every meal, or dipped their vessels and their beds. It is well known, that these rites were observed, with a view of purifying themselves from ceremonial pollution. And Moses informs us, in what manner these purifications were performed; "and he shall *sprinkle* upon him that is to be cleansed, &c."\*

In this manner also, was the blood of the lamb to be applied to the doors of the houses of the Israelites, by *sprinkling* it on the lintels, and two side posts. In allusion to this act, the Apostle calls the blood of Christ, *the blood of SPRINKLING*.†

Luke vii. 29. And all the people that heard him and the Publicans justified God, being baptized (dipped) with the baptism (dipping) of John.

Acts xiii. 24. When John had first preached before his coming, the baptism (dipping) of repentance.

Chap. xvi. v. 33. And he (the Jailor) took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. On this passage, I shall beg leave to present the Reader with the opinion of the judicious Dr. Guyse.† "It seems highly improbable,

\* Levit. xiv. 7.

† Heb. xi. 28. compared with Exod. xii. 22.

† Guyse's Paraph. in Loc. note.

that the Jailor, and his house, were baptized by *immersion*; since, as far as appears, that ordinance was, all on a sudden, administered to them, severally, while they were in prison; and since the mangled condition of Paul and Silas's bodies, by means of their being severely scourged the day before, made it very improper, not to say unsafe, for them to go at midnight into the water so deep, as that mode of baptizing would oblige them to do.\*

Revelation xix. 13. "And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood"—the original word is *Bēbaptizōn*, baptized: now, in order to judge of the true meaning of this word, it may be of use to compare this expression with another, in the Old Testament. In Daniel v. 21, we find the same word used by the Septuagint, in describing the state of Nebuchadnezzar's body: his body was wet, *καθάρ*, baptized *with the dew of heaven*: and it is left to every one to judge, in what manner a person is baptized with rain or dew descending upon him; whether he is *sprinkled* or *plunged*?—once more—

1 Corinthians x. 12. "Our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." Now the inspired Author of Exodus informs us, how this was effected: "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left."|| Here again, is another instance, in which persons are said to be *baptized*, and yet not *plunged* under water.—  
THE EGYPTIANS ONLY WERE THUS BAPTIZED!

\* Guyse's Paraph. in Loc. notè.

|| Exod. xiv. 22.

But our Baptist brethren, driven from this ground, presently make their stand on another, which I conceive to be equally untenable. They tell us, that in many parts of scripture, such a mode of expression is used, as must *necessarily* imply immersion—These are the following :

Matt. iii. 6. “ And were baptized of him in Jordan :” and v. 16. “ And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway, OUT OF THE WATER :” Hence they draw a certain conclusion, that the subjects were actually plunged under water. But we do not perceive, any thing in these words, to weaken our opinion ; for would it be any great inconvenience for them to go into the water *angle deep*, with their sandals, for the sake of being sprinkled ? The whole force of this argument arises from the words IN and OUT OF ; but it is well known that the Grecians use the prepositions *eis*, and *ex*, in a different sense : *eis* often is translated *apud*, *coram*, *ad*, *to*, *at*, *by*, *near*, and *upon* ; and *ex* signifies *from* and *at* ; as the following passages of scripture abundantly prove.

The example of the EUNUCH is pleaded as an incontestible proof of *immersion* : “ And they went down BOTH INTO the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him, and when they were come up OUT OF the water,” &c.\* But, if this passage of scripture proves any thing in favour of immersion, it most unfortunately for our Baptist friends, proves too much, as for instance : they went down BOTH INTO the water, i. e. (according to the interpretation of the advocates for dipping) *they were plunged* under water. Why then it is

\* Acts viii. 38.



equally certain, that PHILIP, AS WELL AS THE EUNUCH, was plunged ! And the inspired Historian expresses himself particularly strong on this point, as though he designed to inform us, that neither the one, nor the other were dipped, for he says, they went down BOTH into the water, BOTH PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH.

Therefore, if our Opponents insist, that the Eunuch was actually IMMERSED, we also insist, (and that upon the *same* ground) that PHILIP ALSO WAS IMMERSED !! This is one instance out of many, which might be adduced, to expose the absurdity of building so much, on the bare construction of a sentence, and the use of a preposition. The expressions and *εις το υδωρ*, and *εκ του υδατος*, do not *necessarily* imply, that either Philip or the Eunuch went *under the water*, for the same preposition is used in Matthew v. 1. "And Jesus went up INTO a mountain to pray," *εις το ορος*. Did Jesus enter into the BOWELS of a mountain to pray ? Chap, xv. 24. "I am not sent but UNTO (*εις*) the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Chapter xvii. 27, "Jesus said unto Peter go thou *εις την θαλασσαν* TO the sea, and cast an hook." Now, if dipping be urged, from the bare meaning of such prepositions IN and UNTO, then Peter must have plunged himself *into* the sea to catch the fish. Again, John xi. 32. "When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down AT HIS FEET, *εις τους ποδας*."

The absurdity will appear still more glaring, by an attention to the mode of expression used by our Lord to the young man who was born blind,† "Go wash IN the pool of Siloam, *εις την κολυμβηθραν*." "To infer therefore,

† John ix. 7.



always a *plunging* of the whole body, in water, because the word *in* (or *us*) occurs in the narrative, would in many instances, be equally as false, as absurd. For instance, our Lord commands the young man born blind, to wash in the pool of Siloam: but that his whole body was not immersed in it is plain; because only his eyes were affected, and only *this* part was to have been washed, in doing which there was no immersion at all."†

Another passage is strongly urged by the advocates for immersion, as unanswerable, which is John iii. 23.—“And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there.” On this we observe, That at the time of John’s appearing, there was a general expectation of the promised Messiah, among the Jews. And when he began to preach, in a public manner, these hopes were raised to the highest pitch, for “the Jews sent Priests and Levites, from Jerusalem, to ask him, who art thou?”\* This expectation brought vast multitudes to hear him; they were convinced of the truth of his doctrine, and were baptized. Now John was the harbinger of Jesus the Messiah, and his baptism was a general purification of the Jews, as a prelude to the coming of Christ: and it is observable, that it is said, verse 25th, “Then there arose a question, between some of John’s Disciples and the Jews, about purifying.”—And as John was a Jewish priest, he must have been accustomed to the *manner* of performing those various purifications, which were appointed, to remove ceremonial pollutions, by dipping a bunch of hyssop in water, and *sprinkling* the unclean person.‡ Is it not therefore

† Mr. De Courcy Rej. 232.

\* Chap. i. 19, 28.

‡ Numb. xix. 18.

highly

highly probable that he arranged the multitudes, on the banks of the river, and that he baptized them, by sprinkling the water over them, either with a bunch of hyssop, or any other convenient instrument; than that he submitted to the Herculean labour of plunging so many thousands, as came to him, from day to day, and from month to month? John had never been accustomed to plungings, under the Mosaic economy, and he would not have adopted *that* mode, without a positive command. But no such command is pretended.

Let us observe again, that as such multitudes came from all parts to hear John, many must have been far from home, and many had *cattle* with them; this circumstance alone would induce John to chuse Enon, *because much water* would be necessary for the accommodation of his hearers. Besides, our *learned* Opponents well know, that the original expression, literally is, *many waters*, or *small streams*, consequently nothing certain can be gathered hence in favour of dipping.

It is reasonable to suppose, that a very large majority of those, were led by curiosity to hear this extraordinary person. When they left their habitations, they had no intention of being baptized; and consequently were not provided with the necessary *change of raiment*. Indeed, were they thus provided, I know not what convenience *this wilderness* could have afforded for undressing, and dressing themselves, consistent with decency. Now, if the Disciples of John were absolutely plunged under water, it must have been either *clothed*, or *naked*; the former would be unsafe, the latter an outrage on modesty: let the advocates for dipping take which alternative they please.

Romans

∴ Romans vi. 3, 4, 5. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death," &c. The learned and judicious expositor, Dr. Owen, affirms, "that there is not one word, nor one expression, that mentions any resemblance, between dipping under water, and the death and burial of Christ; nor one word that mentions a resemblance between our rising out of the water, and the resurrection of Christ. Our being buried with him in baptism into death, v. 4, is our being planted together in the likenels of his death. v. 5. Our being planted together in the likeness of his death, is *not our being dipped under water*, (if it were, then many *ungodly* persons have been, and are daily) but the crucifying the old man, v. 6. our being raised up with Christ from the dead, is not our rising from under the water, but our walking in newness of life, v. 4. by virtue of the resurrection of Christ."§

An eminent Writer of the present day,\* remarks, that "it is observable, that the Apostle, through the whole passage, does not so much as mention, our being baptized into Christ's *burial*, nor into his *resurrection*, but, he says, again, and again, baptized into his *death*. No *mode* of baptism, then can, with certainty, be inferred from these words, for he mentions our having been *buried* and *raised* with Christ, only as the effect, or in consequence of our being dead with Christ, by being baptized into his death; therefore the Apostle *only infers*, that we are buried with Christ—How? by being baptized into his burial? no—but by being baptized into his *death*; and I humbly conceive, that the Apostle would have said, not his *death*, but his *burial*, if he had intended to describe

§ Tracts, p. 582.

\* Dr. Williams, vol. II. p. 125.



Baptism as a resemblance of Christ's *burial* in the *mode* of it, but he seems carefully to avoid it."

And all must acknowledge, that the *burial* of Christ, his being *put into the tomb*, is a more expressive emblem of *immersion*, than his death on the cross of Calvary.

A thought has occurred to me on this subject, which, I conceive, is far from being unnatural. As the body of Christ was *sprinkled*, and *stained* by the blood issuing from his wounded *temples*, his *hands*, his *side*, and *feet*, so the administration of the ordinance of Baptism by *sprinkling* or *pouring*, exhibits a far *more* lively and striking resemblance of the death of Christ, than *plunging*. Therefore, I am firmly of opinion, that if the inspired Writer intended an allusion to the *mode* of Baptism, (which I confess is very doubtful) by the expression *planted together in the likeness of his death*, in the passage under consideration, it is natural to suppose he alludes to that of *sprinkling*.

Thus, I hope, it is established, in the view of the impartial Reader, that the sacred Writers of the New Testament, have not positively decided, that Baptism is to be administered *by immersion*, and by that *mode alone*, and that we may rationally conclude, from their testimony, that it might be administered by *sprinkling*. And the public are now left to judge, whether Mr. B's assertion, amounts to any thing more, or less than an unwarrantable, and an unsupported assumption,† DIPPING IS COMMANDED IN ALL THOSE PLACES, WHERE BAPTISM IS ENJOINED! Nay were we to reason on Mr. B's favourite maxim, we should say—THE SCRIP-



TURE DOES NOT MENTION PLUNGING, THEREFORE IT FORBIDS IT!!

The Author of the small Pamphlet so frequently alluded to, proposed the following question, to the advocates of immersion, "Does the quantity of the elements used in an ordinance enter essentially into the nature, and efficacy of that ordinance? If it do, why do not advocates for *much water*, use also *much bread and wine*, seeing there is as positive a command for the one as the other?"

To this Mr. B. replies\* "I have no objection to say, that the quantity of the elements used in an ordinance, enters essentially into the nature of that ordinance."—Surely! It would have been then, peculiarly kind, to have informed the religious world, more particularly, of this important circumstance; otherwise we shall be in continual danger of erring, by using, either *too much*, or *too little*, and thereby rendering our services of no avail, nay far worse,—of rendering them—*acts of will worship*; and consequently abominable in the sight of God. But on reading farther, we find that Mr. B. has given us information, he tells us that it is "A SUFFICIENT QUANTITY!" Important discovery! Benevolent information! But alas! such is the perverseness of the enquiring Pædobaptist, he retorts the question. "*What do you call a sufficient quantity?*" "I have hitherto taken it for granted, that a few drops sprinkled, or poured, upon the subject, were sufficient." And so they are, for a *sufficiency is a sufficiency!!* Is not this arguing in a circle? But Mr. B. informs us that there must be a *sufficient quantity of water to COVER the body*, in order to constitute scripture bap-

\* Page 20.

tism; but WHO told Mr. B. this? WHERE has Christ ENJOINED IMMERSION? "A sufficient quantity is all that we plead for," says Mr. B. And *who* pleads for more? But *we* think a much *smaller* quantity is sufficient. Mr. B. thinks otherwise—Who then is to be the judge?

In order to support this strange mode of reasoning, Mr. B. says, "For instance, at the Lord's supper, our Lord Jesus, has commanded his Disciples to drink wine in remembrance of him. But should any administrator insist that there should be wine sufficient, only to wet the lips of the communicants, and think this application of the elements, answered all the purposes of the institution; we should object; I presume my Opponent himself would remonstrate"—Most assuredly he would—and his remonstrance, I think, would be founded on a rational ground. The positive command of our Lord is to *eat and drink*; and therefore if the receiver, do no more than *touch* or *wet* his lips, with the bread and wine, certainly he does not comply with the *literal*, and *express* command—to *eat and drink*.—But this cannot apply to the command to baptize—for our Lord Jesus commands nothing more, than an application of water to the body. He does not say—*Go and plunge all nations under water*. Here neither the *mode* of administering, nor the *quantity* is commanded, or even mentioned.

This is little better than serious trifling. It may have the appearance of plausibility, but no man of common sense, will consider it as solid reasoning.

I shall close this branch of the subject with a few reflections.

3d. On the inexpediency of administering the ordi-

K

nance

nance of Baptism by dipping or plunging. *It is unnecessary.* The essence of religion does not consist in the most strict observance of forms and ceremonies. The acceptance of our prayers depends not on the posture of the body, or the form of words; nor the validity of the Lord's supper, on our receiving it, either *standing, sitting, or kneeling*. It would therefore be unnecessary to lay so much stress on things merely circumstantial, and indifferent, as to say that those who comply not with them, cannot receive it acceptably, or pray acceptably.

Thus we argue in the present case: Our Lord Jesus has commanded us to be *baptized*, but not to be *dipped*; therefore it is needless to contend for the *quantity* of water, and the *mode* of administration. "To urge it as necessary (says Dr. Owen) overthrows the nature of a sacrament, by making the validity of Baptism, depend, not on the the thing signified, but on the mere sign."—Hence it follows that it is uncharitable to condemn and reproach, that Baptism, which is administered by sprinkling, or pouring. The censure of the pious and honest *John Bunyan*, is truly applicable to the Baptists of the present day: and as he was of that persuasion he will not be chargeable with partiality in this case. "In my simple opinion, your rigid and CHURCH DISQUIETING principles, are not fit for any age and state of the Church. I say they are babes and carnal, that attempt to break the peace and communion of Churches, though upon no better pretences than WATER."\*

*It is indecent.* It is an indisputable fact, that it was the practice of the ancient Anabaptists, to baptize all persons

\* Bunyan's Works, Vol. I. page 151, 153.



*naked!* as Mr. Henry asserts. And Dr. Williams quotes the learned Mr. Bingham as saying, "After he had produced passages from *Chrysostom*, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, *Leo Veronensis* and *Athanasius*: all which are manifest proofs, that persons were baptized *naked*, either in imitation of Adam in Paradise, or our Saviour *upon the cross*, or to signify their putting off, the body of sin, and the old man with his deeds. And this practice was then so *general*, that we find no exception made, either with respect to the tenderness of infants, or the bashfulness of the female sex, save only where the case of sickness, or disability made it necessary to vary from the usual custom."§ Mr. Baxter also charged this on Mr. Tombes, as being the practice of the Anabaptists, which charge Mr. Tombes could not repel.

We readily confess, that the method adopted by the Anabaptists of the present day, approaches much nearer to the rules of modesty. And, yet, at times, such scenes are exhibited as awaken the sensibility of many, and tinge the cheek of female modesty with a blush. "As to baptizing women, in the face of a full congregation, after all that has been done to preserve decency, is too indelicate a mode to be observed, in the present day, unless it were *absolutely* and *specifically* enjoined, which cannot be proved. For women in loose dresses, to be taken into the arms of men, and plunged into the water struggling, before hundreds of spectators, it is so abhorrent to modesty, that no one can credit such things without far better proof, than was ever brought to countenance them. To

§ Dr. Williams, Vol. III. p. 173, and Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Churches*, Book II. Chap. xi. §. 1, 2.



behold men and women, when about to be plunged, stand on the brink of the Baptisteries; to see the weaker sex, ready to faint for fear, and to hear them scream, when plunged into the water, has more of confusion and dismay in it, than is consistent with the solemn services of a Christian ordinance."† However, we hope that we may venture to say this without offence, that if our brethren, will still adhere to this mode of dipping, the least they can do, to preserve a due decorum, would be, to provide FEMALE DIPPERS, and take care, that none but *women* were present, on this occasion.

*It is Pharisaical.* It was the grand fault of the Jews, that they paid more regard to the externals of religion, than to the essence. This charge I would by no means attempt to fix on my Baptist brethren in this age—far from it. I again declare that I admire the stirring piety, and revere the exemplary conduct of multitudes of that persuasion. But I appeal to every unprejudiced mind, whether it has not somewhat of this appearance, when we hear persons contending so vehemently, for the *absolute necessity of dipping* to constitute the nature of Baptism. When we find them, so unreasonably, attached to that *mode*, and to the quantity of the element, as to refuse to hold communion with their fellow Christians, however useful, or eminently pious, and solely because *they have not been plunged!* and when we behold them so unremittingly employed in making Proselytes from other Churches: we cannot refrain from saying—"Brethren, we perceive that in these things, ye are too superstitious."

Nothing has a stronger tendency to cherish carnal con-

† Shrubsole's Letters, p. 53 and 54.

fidence than making the mere ceremonial parts of gospel worship, of so much importance. And verily, as it is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision that constitutes a real Christian; so it is neither sprinkling, nor plunging, that constitutes the essence of the ordinance of Christian Baptism.

Mr. B. says, "This sentiment, (viz. that infants of believing parents are in covenant with God, and therefore, have a right to Baptism as the seal of that covenant) is highly calculated to engender, and cherish that carnal confidence and pride so awfully apparent in the Jewish nation." But we ask every reader of reflection, which sentiment is most consistent with the freeness of the gospel covenant, that which maintains that children are admitted into the visible Church of Christ, by the unmerited mercy of God, without, and before their being capable of performing any condition whatever: or that sentiment which demands the *condition* of faith, repentance, and submission to a severe act of mortification, before the subject can be admitted? Our adversaries must acknowledge, that many whom they baptize by immersion, are not true believers, consequently such are admitted, *only* into the *visible* Church of Christ; and are therefore in much greater danger of cherishing carnal confidence and pride, than those who have been baptized in infancy.

We also appeal to the impartial Christian world, whether the mode of baptizing adults by plunging them under water, be not *more* highly calculated to engender spiritual pride, than devoting infants to God, by sprinkling or pouring water upon them?

When we see a person standing on the brink of the  
Baptistery,

Baptistery, in an attitude of confidence; when we hear him express his resolution to follow Christ, and submit to this act of self denial, in honour of his Master, and proclaiming aloud to a crowded assembly.

“I am not ashamed to own my Lord,  
Or to defend his cause.”

It strikes the serious, and humble mind with disgust, as favouring too much of spiritual pride, and self confidence.

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On the review of this subject, the following **PRAC-  
TICAL INFERENCES**, claim the attention of the serious Reader,

1st. Adore the condescension of **IMMANUEL**!

In the **PERSON** of Jesus, divinity and humanity were united. *GOD was manifest in the flesh!* In the **CHARACTER** of Jesus, infinite dignity, and matchless compassion are sweetly blended.

At one time, we behold the **LORD OF LIFE**, standing over the tomb of his beloved friend, and calling with a voice that awakened the dead, *Lazarus come forth!* At another, we behold the sympathetic **FRIEND** recalling the departed spirit of the daughter of Jairus, and affectionately presenting their living child to the enraptured parents. At one time we behold the **SON OF GOD**, standing on the summit of the foaming billows of the mighty deep, and at his command the angry waves are hushed into a calm! At another, we behold him as the **SAVIOUR OF SINNERS**, clasping the helpless infants to his bosom—we hear him pronouncing a blessing upon them, and declaring them the subjects of his kingdom.

Here

Here is a combination of wonders. And in which character the SON OF GOD appears most amiable, it is hard to say.

Let every heart feel the warmest affection for this exalted Redeemer, and adore his condescension in admitting our infant offspring into his visible Church.

The heart, that has ever felt the indescribable glow of parental love, cannot but yield to the irresistible influence of the compassion of Jesus; and constrained by the emotions of gratitude, exclaim—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who, although he is the LORD OF ANGELS, and the KING OF GLORY, has condescended to feed his flock like a SHEPHERD, to gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom."

2nd. It is a duty incumbent on those, who have been devoted to God in INFANCY, to remember their PECULIAR obligations.

You have a more lively incentive to *gratitude* than others. Great is the honour conferred upon you in being thus *early* devoted to God. Great is the benefit resulting from the relation, in which you stand to your Creator and Redeemer. While many are ready to ask—"What advantages result from *Infant* Baptism?" You may reply, "As great, as those which arise from *Adult* Baptism. It is the highest privilege that infancy is capable of receiving, to be admitted into covenant with the Lord God, and *adult* baptism does no more."

If you have been baptized in your *infancy*, you have a strong excitement to *humility*. Having been so early introduced



roduced into the school of Christ, you have every reason to blush, that you have made no greater progress in divine knowledge; that you have made such ungrateful returns to God, for that kindness, which he discovered towards you in the morning of life. The Lord God of your fathers, has condescended to stile himself **YOUR** God, he has *nourished and brought you up like children*, and yet *you have rebelled against him*. Let these considerations awaken the most lively contrition.

If you have been baptized in your *infancy*; you are bound by the strongest and most endearing ties, to *love the Lord Jesus Christ*. Jesus deserves, and claims the love of **ALL** intelligent creatures, for *his tender mercies are over all his works*. But **YOU** have been baptized in his name, therefore he has a *stronger* claim on *your* affection. Reflect on the condescending compassion of **IMMANUEL**, to you in your helpless days. He has entered into a solemn and gracious covenant with you.—He has promised to pour out his spirit and his blessing upon you. Let these expressions, and designs of mercy warm your hearts, and excite the sacred principle of love to Jesus in your breast.

You are also, bound to *adorn that gospel which you profess*. You have been devoted to God, in your infant days, therefore those words may be addressed to you with peculiar energy: “Forget not what manner of persons *you* ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness.” You bear the **NAME OF CHRIST**: And is not this a greater honour than to bear the name of the most wealthy, the most potent monarch? Should you not then abhor every thing that has a tendency to dishonour *that worthy name by which you are called?* You

You are bound to discover greater *diligence* in the service of your divine Master. You are the *Disciples* of Jesus—his servants—his *covenant* servants. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your *reasonable service*.”†

You are bound, by your infant baptism, to *cultivate brotherly love*. As you are taken into the family of God, admitted into the visible church of Christ: you are laid under the most endearing obligations, to cherish a cordial affection for every branch of that family. And that this connection has taken place, so *EARLY* in life, in your *INFANT* days, should operate as an *additional* incitement to love.

By your *infant* baptism, you are loudly, and affectionately called to *enter into actual covenant with God at the table of the Lord*. To renew and confirm that solemn engagement which your parents and friends made on your behalf. You were early in life, numbered among the *Disciples* of the Lord Jesus Christ; you are therefore, bound by every consideration of gratitude, affection, and interest to put your names to the covenant, to take upon you those obligations, which rest on every one in actual covenant with God. You are bound to follow the steps of your Master, and yield a chearful, and cordial obedience to all his commandments. Jesus has left his dying request on record: a request addressed to *you* with *peculiar* emphasis, whom he has so highly honoured in *infancy*, “*THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.*” Go then, and publicly acknowledge your approbation of the

† Heb. xii. 1.

conduct of your parents in dedicating you to God, in the ordinance of baptism. Your obligations are many and great. And by what method can you more properly, testify your gratitude? To commemorate the incarnation, the sufferings, and the death of Jesus the Saviour of sinners, is a duty incumbent on *all*, who have seen their danger, and felt their misery. But *you* are bound by ties of a more tender, and endearing nature, to "*take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.*"

Remember also, my young friends, that if you feel not the force of these obligations; if you obey not the voice of the Lord, which entreats you to enter into covenant with the God of your fathers, and the God of your *infancy*; then, be assured that your present privileges will aggravate your guilt, and enhance your condemnation. Where God hath given much, his demands will be in due proportion. The condescension of JEHOVAH, has astonished the angelic legions. In your earliest days, you were dedicated to God, as an holy thing. Your parents, your ministers and your friends, frequently, fervently, affectionately prayed, and wept over you. Your opening mind has been filled with pious instructions. Your passions received an early check, on the first appearances of irregularity. You have now been many years in the school of Christ, and indulged with rich advantages: advantages, which thousands have not enjoyed!

Now pause a moment and reflect—What is the language of all these mercies, which crowd around you every step, in rich profusion? Do they not unite in addressing you in words like these? "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.

Them



Them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed. I love them that love me: and those that seek me **EARLY SHALL FIND ME.**" But should you stop your ears, and harden your hearts against these reiterated exhortations, this awful consequence will ensue; every mercy—every admonition—every prayer presented to God on your behalf—every tear shed over you—your minister, who has travailed in pain until Christ be formed in your soul—your dearest friends, who, with constant solicitude, watched over your conduct—yes, your tenderly affectionate **PARENTS** whose hearts have often bled over you—all—all will come forward, as swift witnesses against you, if you refuse to hearken to the voice of the **LORD YOUR GOD.** If you burst the bands of your education—if you give up the reins to the corrupt bias of your heart—if you crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame: as assuredly as there is a just and terrible God, he will avenge the breach of his covenant, "*and make your plagues wonderful!*" Your condemnation will be aggravated beyond that of millions; beyond the power of language to describe, or imagination to conceive! In *you*, the tremendous declaration of the Judge of the quick and the dead, will be verified—"*Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, THAN FOR YOU!*" Let none therefore dare to trifle with their **INFANT BAPTISM.** It is a solemn engagement: an engagement, which shall be attended with consequences the most serious and important. The peculiar privileges of your covenant relation, in the early part of life, will either enhance your joys, or add fresh horrors to your everlasting misery!



grd. It highly becomes CHRISTIAN PARENTS to be mindful of the duties incumbent on them, towards their children. There are duties, which relate to the body, and the *temporal* concerns of your children. With these I have nothing to do, at present. That fond affection, which glows in the heart, and mingles with every wish, will be irresistible incentives with you, to take care of the temporal welfare of those dear babes.

But brethren and friends, the *grand* object of your endeavours,—your tender solicitude, should be THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL! Those dear infants, have souls

“Which must for ever live  
In raptures, or in wo!”

IMMORTAL SOULS, which will outlive the ruins of the globe, and the general convulsion of nature! THESE PRECIOUS SOULS ARE COMMITTED TO YOUR CARE! A treasure how valuable! A charge how momentous!

In their early life, your first duty is *prayer*. Often take your dear *little ones* in your arms, and carry them to the footstool of mercy, and with that ardent glow of love, which the *parental* breast alone can experience—with that pathetic emphasis, which *parental* feelings alone can dictate—say—

“O thou most indulgent Saviour”—thou hast said, “Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of God.” In chearful obedience to thy command, I bring my children unto thee. Dear Jesus, take them into thy arms, and bless them.—They are the creatures of thy power, they have been devoted to thee, and thou hast been pleased to enter into a covenant

covenant with them: O take them under thy special protection, teach and instruct them in the way that they should go, guide them with thine eye, and make them the subjects of thy pardoning mercy, and saving grace! O Lord teach, and assist *me* to bring them up as Christians in thy fear. They have been *discipled*, and baptized: may I be found diligent, and successful in *teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever thou hast commanded me*. O what precious promises are sealed to them! May they have an early, and a saving acquaintance with these promises! May every one of these blessings be *actually* possessed, and every obligation, according to their capacities, be discharged by my dear children! Mighty Saviour, I would make my supplications unto thee, in behalf of every child, thou hast graciously given me, with the faith, and the importunity of the woman of Canaan in behalf of her daughter. Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my children labour under the guilt, pollution, disease and tyranny of sin and Satan: Lord help me. I cannot doubt of thy *power*, nor, while thy word, thy oath, thy sacred seal stand uncanceled, can I doubt of thy *willingness*, to save to the uttermost all that come unto thee. I do not ground my supplications on the *worthiness* of myself or mine, but on thy *free grant* of covenant favours. On this my faith would rest. I have therefore admitted thy covenant gift in its full extent; and received both the instrument and the seal of faith. Now Lord, help me to make these my children, acquainted with their privileges and obligations: By thy HOLY SPIRIT bless my endeavours, and command success!"§

§ Dr. Williams, with some Variation, Vol. II. p. 320.

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The pious parent is encouraged in these his fervent addresses to the throne of grace, in behalf of his children, by the *nature* of the covenant, it is *free*: not clogged with conditions, above the ability of man to fulfil. It is *unchangeable*: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." †

You are emboldened also, in your prayers, by the *promises of God*. "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed!" "I will pour out my spirit upon thy SEED, and my blessing upon thy OFFSPRING." And an inspired Apostle assures you that, "The promise is, not only unto you, but unto *your children*." No argument can be more powerful and prevalent than the *veracity* of God. And none can urge this argument *so* effectually, as those parents, who have seriously placed their children in a covenant relation to God, in baptism as the seal of that covenant. I see not now those parents (says the pious Mr. Henry ‡) can with equal confidence, pray for their children, WHO DENY THEM TO BE IN COVENANT, AND SO SET THEM UPON EVEN GROUND WITH THE CHILDREN OF INFIDELS! Isaac and Jacob, blessed their children *by faith*; and that faith respected the covenant which God had made with them, and with their seed." "No *prayer* for a blessing is acceptable, but the prayer of *faith*: no *blessing* can be prayed for in faith but what is *promised*; to have a promise, is to have a

† Isa. li. 6.

‡ Treat. on Bapt. p. 242.





PRAYER OF FAITH. Take away the plea of *covenant interest*, and faith is struck *dumb*. Take away *covenant promises*, and faith is struck *blind*. Take away *covenant faithfulness*, and faith has no *standing*. But blessed be thy name, O Lord my God, my children's *covenant interest* is founded on thy testimony, and remains indisputable, therefore I can *plead in faith*; thy precious *promises* are directed to *each* by name, as a covenantee, and therefore I may *view in faith* thy merciful designs towards them; thy faithfulness was never known to fail, it *cannot* fail, and therefore the *heirs of promise* may have strong consolation, *faith* having two immutable things to stand upon, the *promise* and the *oath* of that God who *cannot lie*. Lord increase my faith! And bless my children with the saving knowledge of this covenant!\*

As your children advance in years; as their young minds begin to expand, it will be your duty to *teach them the first principles of the oracles of God*. Teach them the *nature of sin*, and the tremendous consequences of the violation of the righteous laws of an holy God. And when their tender minds begin to tremble beneath the terrors of the Lord, open to them, my brethren, open to them the rich treasures of gospel mercy. Take them by the hand and lead them to the stable and the manger of Bethlehem—lead them to the garden of Gethsemane—to the Judgment Hall—to the cross on Calvary: tell them to look on that dear Jesus, and drop the tear of mingled grief and joy. Tell them, that Jesus came to seek and to save such lost sinners as they are. Tell them of the infinite compassion of the great Redeemer, who

\* Dr. Williams, p. 322.

affectionately.

affectionately invited little children to his arms, and blessed them. Tell them that this Jesus is now alive, and lives for evermore; that millions of helpless babes have been redeemed by his precious blood, and that he is willing to clasp *them* in his arms of mercy, and bless *them*.

It is your duty to explain to them the *nature of gospel ordinances*. As they have been baptized in their infancy, you are to explain to them the nature and the design of this sacrament. That the Lord of heaven and earth has condescended to enter into a covenant with man, and that this covenant includes his *infant offspring*, which covenant has TWO seals annexed to it—BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER. Baptism is a sign or token of the favour of God, and an assurance that he is reconciled to a guilty world. It is a seal which confirms to us, and our children a participation of the promises, and blessings of an external and visible covenant relation to God.

Baptism is a solemn admission into the visible Church of Christ. The Disciples were commanded to admit ALL NATIONS into the school of Christ: to make Disciples of them, and Baptism was the token of their admission. "To *disciple* all nations, is to *christianize* all nations.—Not making a person a Christian *in foro cali*, in the Judgment of Heaven, but declaring him a Christian, *in foro ecclesiæ*, in the Judgment of the Church. They are added to the number. Thus, those that were baptized are said to be *added to the Church*, i. e. added to the number of visible believers. And they are entitled to the privileges of the Church: to those privileges which are common to all visible believers."†

† Henry on Baptism, p. 26.

Baptism is also, justly stiled a seal of that covenant of mercy, which God condescended to make with parents and their children through the Lord Jesus Christ. This covenant contains a variety of rich blessings: blessings adapted to the wretched state of man, and calculated to render him completely happy. Now Baptism is a seal which confirms this covenant; and is designed to *assure us*, that he is willing to make good that promise to us, and our children, which he made to Abraham—"I WILL BE A GOD TO THEE, AND TO THY SEED." And as *circumcision* was enjoined as a seal of confirmation to that holy Patriarch, so is *Baptism* now enjoined as a seal of that covenant to every believing parent and his offspring.

This ordinance in the most solemn manner binds us to be the Lord's. Baptism is a free, and entire surrender of ourselves, and our seed to the service of the Lord God. Parents, who present themselves and their children before the Lord, pledge themselves to observe all the statutes and ordinances of God, and to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

After having thus explained the nature and design of this gospel ordinance, it is your duty to guard their young minds against its *abuse*. Labour to convince them that the salvation of the soul, does by no means depend on the administration of the element of water, but on the application of the precious blood of Christ, which is strikingly represented by the sprinkling of the water in the ordinance of Baptism. "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." §

§ Gal. vi. 5.

Endeavour

Endeavour to expose the absurdity, (not to say the impiety) of making the **MODE** of administration and the **QUANTITY** of the element essential to this Christian ordinance. Baptism is a solemn dedication to God, wherein *water* is used as a *sign* or *token* of spiritual blessings. It cannot, therefore, enter materially into the nature, and affect the validity of the ordinance, let the elements be used in a *larger* or a *smaller* quantity. The religious use of water, is all that is commanded, therefore whether Baptism be administered by **DIPPING—POURING** or **SPRINKLING**, it is of no importance. It favours too much of a Pharasaical spirit, to contend so vehemently for **MODES** and **FORMS**. It deviates from the freeness, and spirituality of the gospel dispensation, which says, "The hour is come, when ye shall, neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." † So, *ceteris paribus*—the hour is come, when ordinances, shall no longer owe their importance to the **MANNER** in which they are administered, but in the **FRAME OF MIND**, and the disposition of the heart. This unreasonable attachment to the **MODE** of Baptism, has a powerful tendency to cherish a legal spirit, and encourage a carnal confidence.

Especially suffer me, to exhort you, by the sacred name of Jesus, in which your children were baptized—by the honour of religion—and by the concern you feel for the present and future welfare of those young immortals—by these tender and powerful motives, let me charge you to *walk before your family in the fear of God*.

† John iv. 21.



Live so as to enable you to say—“*Walk, as ye have us for an example!*” Example is far more prevalent than precept. Children are fond of treading in the steps of their parents. Ungodly parents dare not reprove their children, lest they retort—“*Physician heal thyself!*”—Remember the honourable testimony, which the Lord God bore to the piety of Abraham, and his exemplary conduct in his family. “I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” \*

The impiety of parents hardens the hearts of children, and excites the strongest prejudices in their minds against religion. To this source may be traced, a great part of the iniquity of the rising generation. And, at the last great judgment day, multitudes of those, who will be banished from the presence of God into everlasting punishment, may lay the blood of their souls, at the door of their *ungodly parents!!*

Suffer me, therefore, to beseech you who have felt the warm emotions of paternal love, to hear the strong and pathetic words of the Lord: “These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” †

\* Gen. xviii. 19.

† Deut. vi. 7.

And the practice of baptizing children will furnish a pious parent with a variety of convincing arguments, while pleading with them, and exhorting them to know, to love and to obey the Lord God of their fathers.—Taking his child in his arms he may address him in the striking language of a pious Author. \*

“My dear child, thou art sinful from thy birth, guilty and polluted. This thy baptism teaches. In baptism, God shews and testifies that he will forgive sins; and this is one reason why thou hast been baptized, because thou art a sinner, standing in need of spiritual washing. Thou art not to think that the water of baptism takes away sin, that is, pardons and makes thee pure in thy soul; no, no, it only shews thee plainly that thou *wantest* this pardon and purity; and it also shews that God is merciful, and willing to give thee every good thing in this life, and in the world to come, on thy coming to him. He says in his *word*, that he will give grace and glory; that those who seek him *early*, that is, when *young* as thou art, shall find him; and Christ says he will in no way cast out any poor sinner that cometh to him. But thy baptism shews *still more plainly*, that thou art guilty, and that God is merciful—That thou art impure, that is, unfit to go to heaven, but that God is willing, on thy coming to him, to cleanse thee and make thee meet for heaven. My dear child, learn this, and strive to understand it without delay. If thou diest without repentance—how shall I speak of it?—thou must perish for ever! No one goes to heaven without pardon, and thou must not expect to go there without repentance. And O remember, that

\* Dr. Williams, Vol. II. p. 331.

not *only* the bible, the sabbaths, the sermons, the prayers, and the advices thou hast had from me and others, will rise up against thee, but *also* thy *baptism*, in the day of judgment. O then, my dear child, bring thy poor perishing self to Jesus Christ. He will not put thee off, for he has declared he will not. He went through every state, from infancy to manhood; and having been a child himself, when in the world, he receives children. O the happiness he has to give! He will not only keep thee from hell, but at death take thee to heaven. He alone can make thee truly good; I cannot. No body on earth can. But Jesus Christ, being himself divinely good and gracious, can make us good; yes, he can and will make thee so, on coming to him with all thy heart. This thou mayest be as sure of as that thou art baptized. For baptism according to the will of Christ is a seal of confirmation. You know, my dear, that, what an *honest* man confirms by *sealing* it, he will stand by. Much more so will our gracious Lord and Saviour. Sensible of thy sinful and helpless condition, with the assurances of divine grace, and with a contrite heart, pray unto this merciful Redeemer in some such words as these. "O Lord God, who alone canst save me from sin and the wrath to come, accept the prayers and cries of a helpless child.—No one on earth, or in heaven, but thyself, O Lord most merciful, can help me. I am destroyed by sin, the *sin of my heart* especially, but my help is from thee. Accept me in Christ, whose nature and life were perfectly holy, and who is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, to all thy children. O that as I have been baptized with water, I may also be baptized with  
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the Holy Ghost, And as this was sanctified and sealed by my baptism, grant it me, O Lord God, for Christ's sake. Amen."

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I have now brought my design to a close. And I take this opportunity to say, that as I, most reluctantly, entered into the controversy, I shall now take my final leave of it: resolved (according to my present views) to take no public notice of any thing that may be written in reply. More important duties demand my attention and my time.

I cannot however, put a period to this work, without declaring that I have not been actuated by a principle of malevolence to any of my Anti-pædobaptist Brethren. I wish ever to maintain such language on *this*, and on *every other* religious subject, as may be consistent with that candour, which the gospel inculcates, and humility requires. I love the person, and revere the character of every serious Anti-pædobaptist, and would gladly cherish the most friendly intercourse with him, as a minister, or a private Christian, provided he would observe, in his conduct towards Pædobaptist Churches, that admirable precept of our Lord—"THEREFORE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM!" †

Permit me also to express a hope that nothing which I have said, will be conceived to have arisen from a principle of *resentment* against my *quondam* friend Mr. BIRT. I solemnly aver that it has not. Most cheerfully would

† Matt. vii. 12.



I give him the right hand of fellowship. Most sincerely would I wish to live on terms of friendship with him, (while he observes that *golden rule of equity* enjoined by our Lord) and with *all* who love the Lord Jesus Christ, during my abode in this world. And it is my fervent and unceasing prayer that I may dwell with them in those happy regions, where all the inhabitants are of one heart and one soul—where no jarring sentiment, or discordant passion shall ever interrupt the endearments of

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